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Daily Report
Central Eurasia

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Russia: Yeltsin's Security Head Suggests Postponement of Elections

LD0505094096 London THE OBSERVER in English 5 May 96 p 5

[Article by Victoria Clark in Moscow: "Yeltsin's Man Stills His Master's Voice"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SOMETHING was not quite right. President Boris Yeltsin was surrounded by bodyguards wielding umbrellas as he climbed into his Zil limousine after a stop at the new Second World War memorial church on May Day morning last Wednesday. But his shadow, chief bodyguard Lieutenant General Aleksandr Korzhakov, was nowhere at hand.

That most elusive and sinister member of Yeltsin's entourage was heading off alone past the grey splashing fountains in the opposite direction to Yeltsin's cavalcade, his blazer tails flapping in the wind.

While Yeltsin sped away on his campaigning business — gamely shaking a leg with a group of folk dancers, flashing smiles and pressing flesh — Korzhakov seemed pleased to be waylaid by THE OBSERVER, and to put a bomb under his master's efforts to get re-elected.

He revealed that he wants the June election called off. 'A lot of influential people are in favour of postponing the elections and I'm in favour of it too because we need stability,' he said. If Korzhakov feels his master's chances of winning are so slim that they are not up to this democratic contest and if he is prepared to admit his doubts so openly, it is a sure sign that Yeltsin's campaign is at best in deep trouble, at worst doomed and Russia's chance of orderly democratic development with it.

Korzhakov is a powerful man. Once a KGB bodyguard, now chief of Kremlin security with 25,000 elite troops at his command and infinite patronage to dispense, he has been Yeltsin's most trusted supporter and friend for almost a decade. Moreover, he is keeper of the bottle when Yeltsin's need arises and a source of succour in time of doubt.

Korzhakov's influence over his master is seen as having grown in direct proportion to Yeltsin's diminishing reforming zeal. A typical middle-brow KGB product, Korzhakov is a Russian nationalist with a deep distrust and scorn for Western influence and a yearning for Russia's old superpower status. But his closeness to Yeltsin has allowed him scope to meddle in affairs which do not concern him — Chechnya, oil exports and banking to name a few.

'I have a properly defined role,' he said. Would he please define it for THE OBSERVER? 'No,' he answered shortly.

In the minds of the many who believe a Communist victory would be followed by a witch-hunt, it is no surprise that Korzhakov wants to call off the elections.

A secret Kremlin poll conducted in mid-April showed that Yeltsin, at 10 per cent, is trailing Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov at 30 per cent, and the nationalist buffoon Vladimir Zhirinovskiy at 15 per cent. This has come as a shock to the President's entourage and there has been loose talk about falsifying the election results by up to 10 per cent. The panic is on, but Korzhakov's exaggerated influence over Yeltsin means he has more to fear than most.

'If we have the elections there is no way of avoiding a fight,' he said. 'If Yeltsin wins the radical opposition will claim the results were falsified and there will be unrest. If Zyuganov wins, even if he wants to take a centrist line, the same people won't let him and they'll scream.'

If the elections were postponed he can envisage cooperation with some Communists, pointing to the Italian party as a good example of Communists one might work with.

But with just six weeks to go before the election might not postponement lead to trouble? Korzhakov smiles and gazes towards the fountains as if deep in spontaneous thought. 'Why should it? It all depends where the initiative comes from,' he said.

Yeltsin's spokesman was rattled to hear Korzhakov had been sounding off in this vein. 'He told you officially that he wanted the elections postponed?' said Sergey Medvedev, with an almost audible groan. 'All I can say is that in his meeting with Aleksandr Lebed today President Yeltsin confirmed elections should take place as scheduled according to democratic procedure.'

Rival presidential hopeful Lebed emerged from that meeting saying the talk had centred on fears of unrest following the elections. 'The growling ex-army general warned that any attempts to postpone the election or organise a conspiracy behind the voters' backs will come to no good'.

Thanks to Korzhakov's disclosure, a conspiracy is exactly what it is beginning to look like. What Korzhakov calls the 'initiative' for postponing the elections is apparently coming from a reassuring variety of groups.

But an open letter from 13 of Russia's biggest industrialists and bankers, printed on the front page of

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KOMMERSANT-DAILY a week ago, has had by far the biggest impact. They warned that Russian society is dangerously split. 'The crack which divides us into red and white, ours and theirs, goes through Russia's heart,' they said, warning that whoever wins the elections will only be ruling in the name of a 'minority and would only be able to confirm their power by means which lead to civil war'.

They were careful to be critical of both Yeltsin's mistakes and the Communists' plans and called for a 'compromise'. They signed off with a threat that 'Russian entrepreneurs do have the necessary resources and will to influence the too unprincipled and uncompromising politicians'.

Only the letter's initiator, Boris Berezovskiy, head of the LogoVAZ automotive and industrial conglomerate, has demanded the elections be called off. 'The question of our system is not decided by voting. It's being decided either with the help of civil war or with the help of compromise between opposing politicians,' he told SEGODNYA newspaper.

Presumably Berezovskiy is one of the 'influential people' Korzhakov referred to. It is no surprise that the two see eye to eye, because they happen to enjoy a close relationship based on Berezovskiy's reliance on Korzhakov for his krysha (roof)-Russian mafia parlance for protection.

'Berezovskiy makes no secret of his krysha's identity,' said Andrey Piontkowski, a respected political analyst. 'When he was hauled in for questioning after Vladimir Listyev's murder [the media mogul murdered in March 1995], he was openly boasting about how he got out thanks to a phone call from Korzhakov. He would have cleared this political initiative with him.'

Piontkowski is appalled by the way the liberal Russian media, having pragmatically lined up in support of Yeltsin's re-election bid, are now seizing on the letter of the 13. 'It's hard to imagine a more lethal blow against your own election campaign,' he said scathingly, comparing Korzhakov, the 13 and the newspaper editors to rats leaving Yeltsin's sinking ship.

'Yeltsin is not understanding much any more, but then you have to remember how Hindenburg only had everything explained to him at the last minute,' says Piontkowski, referring to the German President who appointed Hitler Chancellor and ended his days as a figurehead.

According to a report in the BOSTON GLOBE in February, U.S. defence analysts have been gloomily forecasting just such an attempt to postpone the elections. 'A growing number [of intelligence officials] are saying that, if Yeltsin's health or political popularity give them no other choice, the Russian President's entourage might postpone or manipulate the 16 June elections in the interests of personal survival,' the report said.

Calling off the June election would land the West in a pretty pickle. He IMF is lending Russia $10 billion (6.6bn) and would be delighted to have continuity in the Kremlin. But no Western politician could condone such a break with democratic form.

It remains to be seen how the Communists will respond to the last-ditch calls for 'compromise, and postponement. Piontkowski thinks they will simply despise their enemies' terrified faint-heartedness, laugh and sweep to victory.

Aleksandr Kinsburskiy of the Vox Populi polling service was also sceptical of a happy outcome for Korzhakov. He thinks Yeltsin and Zyuganov have flung too much mud at each other to be seen to kiss and make up.

But it is possible the Communists are little more united than Yeltsin's entourage regarding the election.

There are rumours that Zyuganov, fearful of his party's hardliners and short on supporters, would welcome a compromise. He might claim the premiership in exchange. 'It's much better to be the opposition than the leading party, given the complexities of the reform process,' Andrey Kortunov of the Russian Science Foundation told the MOSCOW TIMES. Yeltsin is taking his time responding. Happily hopping around with the folk dancers, he looked blissfully ignorant of what his friend was up to.

Russia: Yeltsin Rejects Korzhakov's Views on Postponing Elections

LD0605113396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1059 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 6 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has rejected statements by his chief bodyguard and confidant that the Russian presidential elections might be postponed.

Responding to Interfax concerning possible postponement of the elections, as head of the presidential security service Alexander Korzhakov told Interfax earlier, Yeltsin underlined that "several people, not only Korzhakov, believe that Zyuganov's victory would be the beginning of a civil war.

"I trust in the wisdom of Russian voters. That's why elections will be held in the time determined by the constitution," he said.

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Yeltsin said he "told Korzhakov not to meddle in politics and not to make such statements any more." Korzhakov has recently given interviews both to the British weekly Observer and to Interfax.

Russia: Zyuganov: Election Postponement 'Gross Violation of Law'

LD0505201796 Moscow NTV in Russian 1700 GMT 5 May 96

[From the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Studio announcer Yevgeniy Kiselev] Today our correspondent Aleksandr Zarelyan, speaking to Gennadiy Zyuganov, the main rival of Boris Yeltsin, asked him what the leader of the communists thought about the idea of the elections being postponed and of a possible compromise with the authorities that many are speaking of now.

[Begin recording] [Zarelyan] Will you agree to a postponement of the elections?

[Zyuganov, at Sheremetyevo airport] You are proposing right away that the Law on the Constitution should be violated. We said a long time ago that what should triumph is the law, not political expediency, not the opinion of individual leaders, but the law. There cannot be elementary law and order without that, and the branches of power are obliged to show that they abide by the law and that they are able to abide by it strictly. On the other hand, they should give citizens the right in the ballot papers to elect one political force or another and to guarantee that this will be honest. On the other hand, we are in favor of there being guarantees of stability and security, confidence. And nobody will get the jitters, or ask: Will they come [to power]? Will they confiscate [property], will they not confiscate? Will there be? Will not there be? Everything should be strictly in keeping with the law. Then everybody will carry out his own business and will realize that we are not all immortal. There comes a time when one reports back to the electors, stands for reelection. That is a natural and normal state, if you really want to speak about democracy and the power of the people.

[Zarelyan] So, as I understand from your reply you will hardly agree to that compromise regarding the postponement of the elections?

[Zyuganov] You are not proposing a compromise! You are proposing a gross violation of the Constitution and the law! [laughs]

[Zarelyan] I am asking about it.

[Zyuganov] And I am telling you that I am the most law-abiding person in the country.

[Zarelyan] Are you planning to meet Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin on your return from Germany?

[Zyuganov] We are not ruling out such a meeting.

[Zarelyan] Do you agree to step down as presidential candidate?

[Zyuganov] Again you are not directing the question to me. A bloc has been formed. There are 6 million signatures backing it. A platform has been drawn up, and all the rest. The elections are in full swing. We are carrying out an electoral campaign and you can see that, on the whole, a very substantial part of the citizens of Russia support us. [end recording]

[Kiselev] Gennadiy Zyuganov gave that interview before he set of for Germany where he is going at the invitation of an authoritative public organization that enjoys the support of the Germany Government, the German-Russian Forum.

Russia: Filatov Opposes Postponement of Presidential Elections

LD0605083696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0749 GMT 6 May 96

[By Aleksandr Nechayev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW May 6 (Itar-Tass) — A top organiser of the election campaign of President Boris Yeltsin opposed the idea of postponing the presidential elections, qualifying it as "harmful" for the head of state and expressing hope that the president is resolute to hold the vote as scheduled.

"Today, one month before elections, to raise the issue of postponing elections, which is negatively assesed in society, means to push towards danger when certain circles can provoke disorders, coups", Sergey Filatov, who heads the movement in support of Boris Yeltsin at the June 16 elections, told regional editors on Monday.

"We stand only for the constitutional way", he stressed.

Filatov was commenting on the statement of Yeltsin's influential personal security chief Aleksandr Korzhakov, who told the British Observer newspaper that he favoured the postponement of the vote as it could trigger civic unrest.

Filatov said that Korzhakov's statement was made in the wrong moment and was caused by fears that the president would lose the vote. Besides, it would impede the work of Yeltsin's campaigners.

"As far as the statemnt of Aleksandr Vasilyevich is concerned, I believe that in the period when there are positive dynamics, when the ratings (of Yeltsin) are

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growing, such statements are harmful", Filatov said, adding that such proposals can be triggered "by fear, by uncertainty in the victory".

He believes that the president does not share the view of his personal security chief. Filatov quoted Yeltsin as saying a month ago that there could be no talk about any postponement of eletions.

"I believe his position has not changed in a month," he stressed.

Besides, Filatov sees no legal mechanism to postpone elections as everything is fixed by the constitution.

Korzhakov's statement was preceeded by the address of 13 leading bankers and businessmen, who actually called for a compromise between Yeltsin and his main communist rival Gennadiy Zyuganov.

Filatov criticised the address as well.

"If the talk is about a compromise among politicians, about common principles of the development of the country, then it should be welcome. But if it is an attempt to stand above the constitution, to create a sovraconstitutional body, then it is war", Filatov said stressing that his attitude to the letter of the 13 was "negative" because he viewed it as an attempt to "stand above the law".

He recalled similar attempts to create a sovraconstitutional body made by former Russian parliament which only flared up the conflict between Yeltsin and the legislature and ended in a bloody clash in October 1993.

Filatov also fears that the bankers's address may add popularity to the so-called "Third Force" represented by liberal reformist Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, hard-rule advocate Aleksandr Lebed and eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fedorov.

The address "can push voters away from the president to the 'third force'... It is possible to do so that it wins (elections)", Filatov said.

He resolutely warned against any secret election manoeuvering, which he qualified as actions "under the blanket", because Russian society is radically opposed to them.

"It is wrong to slacken the pace" of the election campaign. "Our team is in the stage of deployment and in a combat mood", he said, but admitted that it was necessary to work hard to get Yeltsin elected.

Filatov divided Russian regions into three groups: the pro-reform ones which number 20 and have 40 million voters, the anti-reform regions numbering 50 with 50 million voters and 20 undecided.

He believes a breakthrough in Yeltsin's popularity ratings will take place in mid-May, although Filatov admitted that he had expected that to happen earlier.

Russia: Seleznev: No Grounds To Postpone Presidential Elections

LD0605115396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1013 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 6 (Interfax) — There are no grounds to postpone presidential elections in Russia, believes Speaker of the Russian State Duma Gennadiy Seleznev.

"The law on presidential elections in Russia has been adopted, their date has been set, the political situation enables us to hold the elections in due time — June 16," Seleznev told Interfax on Sunday night in Moscow.

He was commenting on the view of head of the Presidential Security Service Lt. Gen. Aleksandr Korzhakov that it is necessary to postpone the elections for the sake of public tranquility and stability, expressed in a telephone conversation with an Interfax correspondent on Sunday.

"Instability in Russia is not caused by the Russian Communist Party or its leader Gennadiy Zyuganov. It is not him but Russian President Boris Yeltsin who rocks the boat," said Seleznev.

He is sure that "Zyuganov will win in the first round of presidential elections if the elections are fair."

Russia: Yeltsin Asks Yaroslavl Public To Ensure Political Stability

LD0305162296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1542 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YAROSLAVL, May 3 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin called on the public in the Yaroslavl region Friday to ensure Russia's political stability for the next four years on June 16, the presidential election day.

"This will be a real contribution from each of us to making Russia stronger and ensuring better life," he said. "This will be our contribution to the strengthening of the well-being of every Russian family and the calm and wealthy future for our children and grandchildren."

Combined with financial stabilization and suppressed inflation, obtained over the previous four years of reforms, political stability will help attract investments and ensure a production growth, Yeltsin said.

The ongoing reforms are not yet over, he said. Moreover, "there is a real danger of a turn back," he noted.

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Yeltsin admitted that some errors had not been avoided in the past, but now "they have become our experience and our capital."

To make sure the reforms are efficient, it is necessary to raise budget expenditures on and salaries in culture, education and science as of 1997, he said.

The main obstacle on the way of these sectors, political dictate and censorship, has been destroyed, Yeltsin said. Such things must be prevented from emerging in Russia in the future, he said.

Yeltsin called for higher responsibility while making use of the freedom, saying it will be a basis for the unprecedented growth of Russia's well-being. "The historical experience of the whole mankind confirms that there is no other way to prosperity and wealth," he said.

"Freedom is a task to solve every day a new," Yeltsin said. "Freedom is a choice of possibilities to be made by everyone independently."

Speaking on the prompt payment of wages, Yeltsin said he had not yet relieved the government from the blame for it. However, local authorities and enterprise directors are also to blame in many cases, he added.

It looks like trade unions have forgotten that they are to supervise the managers of both state-run and private enterprises, Yeltsin said.

Law enforcers help stop some managers who go too far, he said. "I assure you, this is only the beginning," he said. "However, the main thing is to learn to efficiently use the levers of the market economy.

"We are already good at something," he noted.

"We have managed to considerably slow down the growth in prices using a thought-out and responsible financial policy rather than an order or a Central Committee resolution," Yeltsin said.

Russia: Yeltsin 'Will Not Remove' Candidature for Presidency

LD0305135496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1230 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YAROSLAVL, May 3 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin who arrived in Yaroslavl on Friday, visited earlier in the day the military memorial cemetery which was reconstructed towards the 50th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War. He laid flowers there and met with war veterans.

The president gave a negative answer to the question of a Communist war veteran who asked the president whether he is going to withdraw his candidature for presidency.

"I will not remove my candidature. I will struggle for people, for their families, for their high living standards, for freedom, not for power," said Yeltsin.

Meeting with residents of Yaroslavl near the monument to the city founder Prince Yaroslav the Wise, the president said that "the Communist revanche should not be permitted, otherwise there will be a trouble." Yeltsin admitted that many officials, including the former Communist-minded directors, are stealing. "But my hand is firm," he said.

Yeltsin said that his state of health is now "excellent" and asked residents of Yaroslavl to back him at the elections on June 16. "This will be a crucial moment in the history of Russia, reforms may not be stopped," he said.

Near the monument to Yaroslav the Wise, the president met with representatives of the Yaroslavl Muslim community. They told Yeltsin about the restoration in Yaroslavl of the Muslim cultural center. Together with the administration he promised assistance in financing the project. "Pray for me, I will protect you from the Communists. Orthodox believers pray now for the president, do the same," said Yeltsin.

During the conversation with residents of Yaroslavl, the president said that freedom is one of the great gains of modern Russia. He said that he will shortly sign new laws on citizenship, on receiving and giving up citizenship. Yeltsin said that he has two files on his table. One file, with two sheets, about giving up citizenship. And the other file with many applications from people, mainly intellectuals who once went to live abroad and now want to return to Russia and be its citizens. "This is freedom," said Yeltsin.

Speaking about the Chechen problem, he said that there is no war in its proper sense in Chechnya now. Jets and artillery are not used. "We shall begin talks, possibly, with field commanders. And we shall come to agreement that the war end there," said Yeltsin.

Russia: Yavlinskiy Details Meeting With Yeltsin

LD0505202096 Moscow NTV in Russian 1700 GMT 5 May 96

[Studio interview with Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, Yabloko leader and presidential candidate, by Yevgeniy Kiselev — live; from the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Kiselev] Another of today's — and not just today's — major developments was that President Boris Yeltsin received in the Kremlin Grigoriy

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Yavlinskiy, a candidate for the top post in the state and one of Yeltsin's main rivals at the presidential election due to be held on 16 June. As promised, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy is today live in the "Itogi" studio.

Grigoriy Alekseyevich, will you please tell us how this meeting came about? Who initiated it? Did you ask the president to receive you, or did the president invite you?

[Yavlinskiy] As a matter of fact, the president's aides approached me with a request, or rather with information that the president would be interested in meeting me. I agreed.

[Kiselev] How long did you spend with him?

[Yavlinskiy] Well, my understanding is that the president is now meeting all the presidential candidates — you said today he was going to meet Zyuganov too.

[Kiselev] It has been rumored. It was actually reported by INTERFAX but there has been no confirmation so far.

[Yavlinskiy] Our meeting today lasted two hours and 15 minutes...

[Kiselev, interrupting] Did you say two hours and 15 minutes?

[Yavlinskiy] Yes, two hours and 15 minutes. It was quite a comprehensive discussion of the country's current main problems.

[Kiselev] Tell me, how long ago did you last meet Boris Nikolayevich?

[Yavlinskiy] Well, in the past five years I have had two meetings with Boris Nikolayevich.

[Kiselev] This, then, was your second meeting...

[Yavlinskiy, interrupting] It was our second meeting in the last five years.

[Kiselev] How did you find the president?

[Yavlinskiy] Well, since it was two presidential candidates meeting, all I can say is that he was attentive, composed, and showed more than a little interest in the discussion.

[Kiselev] I realize that the content of such meetings is not usually disclosed, considering the delicate nature of the situation, when every discussion, every meeting between two presidential candidates, particularly between the incumbent president and someone who, like yourself, strives to take over his post in the Kremlin, can give rise to a whole lot of unnecessary hypotheses and false interpretations. Nonetheless, I cannot help asking you what you discussed. Please tell me what you can. I realize that you will not tell everything.

[Yavlinskiy] As a matter of fact, in this particular case I am virtually ready to tell you all that took place there. There were no secrets in this meeting. There was no hidden agenda. The raison d'etre of our meeting was to discuss the most serious problems we have in the country at present. I informed the president about my understanding of what is happening with regard to the key points and how these problems should be tackled.

These problems are linked with the war in Chechnya. They are linked to events that took place in Chechnya following what I consider an inept implementation of the plan submitted by the president. These problems are linked to crime and corruption, with more abuses committed by the state than individual citizens. These problems are linked with economic policies, taxation, investments, and the situation at privatized enterprises. There are issues here linked with welfare programs that are ever more populist and, therefore, meaningless, while the main social issues continue unresolved. Finally, we have issues linked to civil rights, the defense of citizens' rights, freedoms, and property in our country and how we perceive the necessity to tackle them — how they should be solved — and this is precisely the reason why the meeting was so long, because we had an opportunity of setting out in detail the ways in which these problems might be resolved.

[Kiselev] Grigoriy Alekseyevich, we have received unconfirmed reports that you gave some kind of a document to the president in the course of your meeting with him. Is that so?

[Yavlinskiy] Yes, everything I told you was set out in the document I gave to the president. It says that while I remain a political opponent of his, I submit to him my considerations of our main problems and the ways to tackle them, including details of what needs to be done. One other important question concerned personnel issues. In other words, it was said that only substantial personnel changes in the government and the presidential administration alike can underpin any changes in policy, and I said that serious changes were needed in many areas and I meant serious, rather than radical changes. The president's agreement to the changes that are needed can only be demonstrated by this.

[Kiselev] What was Boris Nikolayevich's attitude to this? As far as is known, Yeltsin always reacts sensitively whenever anyone gives him any specific advice, especially where personnel matters are concerned.

[Yavlinskiy] I have to tell you that on this occasion no specific names or surnames were discussed where personnel matters were concerned.

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[Kiselev] You did not name anyone or give him any such recommendations.

[Yavlinskiy] I replied to questions. When questions about specific people were asked, I set out my point of view. In particular, I said that consequences should be brought to bear on people responsible for major failures in our policy, for the blood that has been spilled. Such people cannot carry on any longer if plans are afoot to have democratic and open policies in the country.

This was what we really discussed with the president. The president showed much attention. He took a close, and I would even say keen interest in every aspect of the discussion. This was very important.

[Kiselev] Grigoriy Alekseyevich, I am not asking you anything now, just let me discourse on some points without expecting you to reply. It is, in my view, quite clear that Yeltsin does not entirely believe — at least I can assume that he does not entirely believe — the encouraging results of sociologists' opinion polls. All the more so because one can always cast doubt on how reliable these polls are in present-day Russia. In this situation, I believe, the president is looking for some safety margins. Incidentally, the same opinion polls — I have seen at least one — suggest that Yeltsin standing not on his own but as a candidate from a certain coalition that would include the present leaders of the democratic opposition, would be much more successful at the presidential election. This is where a question arises. You will realize that everyone is expecting this question and asking it: Did the president ask you, did he suggest you withdraw from the race in order to prevent the Communists from coming to power? Or maybe he discussed with you your possible moves if, after the first round, Zyuganov and Yavlinskiy — I mean Yeltsin and Zyuganov — go through to the second round, and Yavlinskiy's word would to a large extent determine who gets the support of the 7 or 10 percent of the votes — I am not sure what share your firm supporters constitute?

[Yavlinskiy] We did not discuss the problem of the second round. As for the first round, during our discussion I said that the question now is not that of withdrawing — because the withdrawal is not the main point, it is not the point under discussion. What we have is the questions of specific current policies and serious policy changes. This is why I am contesting the election. I told the president that I am not trying to get some specific post in this election or blindly aspiring to become president. My intention is to influence and alter, either on my own or in some other way, the political climate and state of affairs, primarily with regard to the economy, and also to human rights and the safety of our citizens. These are the crucial tasks facing me. This is what I want to achieve.

[Kiselev] What about preventing the extreme left-wing forces from coming to power?

[Yavlinskiy] Well, this is for the election to determine. As for what I want — and I was indeed asked this question today — I answered that I wanted to win the election. This is my answer to the question about who to prevent and who not to prevent. I can only reaffirm this here.

[Kiselev] And yet — what next? This is another question on everyone's mind. Did you agree to continue your meetings and contacts? Did the president tell you that he would see you and talk to you again, that he would think over the ideas you had put forward to him today?

[Yavlinskiy] Boris Nikolayevich said that the conversation was a difficult one indeed. He said he would shortly give serious consideration to everything we discussed today.

He asked me to be more detailed about a number of questions. Everything will now depend on him. If Boris Nikolayevich deems it necessary, this conversation will actually be continued.

[Kiselev] The last question I would like to put to you is this. You came to us before the start of our program, and I think you either saw [Yeltsin's chief bodyguard General Aleksandr] Korzhakov's interviews — two interviews given to the British OBSERVER and to our Russian INTERFAX agency — or perhaps learned about them beforehand. Korzhakov openly wants the elections to be cancelled and postponed, saying that elections should not be held on 16 June. How would you comment on this?

[Yavlinskiy] Since Aleksandr Vasilyevich emphasized that it is his personal viewpoint. Well, everyone is entitled to one. It is quite likely that security people would prefer not to have any elections, for this way things are calmer and safer. In actual fact, a cancellation of the elections and security are linked here, at least from Aleksandr Vasilyevich's point of view. I do not see anything surprising here, in the same way in which there was nothing surprising about the fact that suddenly people who usually supported Boris Nikolayevich advised him to enter into some kind of completely incomprehensible alliance with Gennadiy Zyuganov, for the same reason — a possible cancellation of the elections and division of spoils. There are various ideas on this score. Those who say that President Yeltsin is, of course, under pressure from various factions are right. Our whole

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conversation today was devoted to how this or that presidential candidate might win the elections and not to ways of having the elections cancelled.

[Kiselev] Well, Grigoriy Alekseyevich, thank you for your answers. I realize it was not easy for you to answer many of my questions. Nonetheless, we are grateful to you for the frankness you could afford today.

Let me remind you that interviewed live in our program has been Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, who had a meeting in the Kremlin today with Boris Yeltsin, which lasted more than two hours.

Russia: Yabloko: Yavlinskiy Not To Quit Elections To Help Yeltsin

LD0405153696 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1500 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Some politicians are persistently putting out rumors that [Yabloko leader] Grigoriy Yavlinskiy has agreed to withdraw his candidacy for the post of president of the Russian Federation in favor of Boris Yeltsin in connection with his participation in setting up the Reforms — a New Course coalition. However, the Yabloko faction's press service today issued a statement in which it said that there are no grounds for such claims. [passage omitted]

Russia: Presidential Aide Discusses Yeltsin-Zyuganov 'Compromise'

LD0505205196 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1600 GMT 5 May 96

[Studio interview with Yuriy Baturin, presidential aide for national security, by Nikolay Svanidze — live; from the "Mirror" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Svanidze] Let us go back to the bankers' address to Gennadiy Zyuganov. Yuriy Baturin, Yeltsin's aide for national security, is in the studio of the "Mirror" program. This address is just a piece of paper, which in the final analysis contains just general statements. However, the consequences of that piece of paper are quite interesting, and the offer of a compromise has been interpreted in society quite reasonably. What is compromise prior to elections? A compromise would mean that both sides are happy: Yeltsin stays in power, elections are cancelled, and Zyuganov is offered a major government post.

[Baturin] There are grounds for these rumors in the sense that certain political forces, including the businessmen who addressed the letter to Zyuganov, are no doubt seeking ways of compromise, which they have not made clear in their statement, along the lines you have mentioned. That does not at all mean that the current authorities and the president will consider these kind of measures.

[Svanidze] Have there been any negotiations between the authorities and the Communists about the observation of some sort of elementary rules of the game, such as that the defeated should recognize their defeat while the winners should not throw into jail those who have lost the game.

[Baturin] Of course, these negotiations have possibly taken place. The president has been meeting other presidential candidates, as you know. He will also be meeting representatives of various political forces who hold meetings among themselves. Talks at such meetings always cover quite a wide range of issues. What you have been talking about is obvious and these issues cannot be excluded from the agenda of these meetings.

Russia: Yeltsin-Zyuganov Deal Said Not Feasible

MK0605094596 Moscow OBSHCHAYA GAZETA in Russian No. 171145, 5–11 May 96 (signed to press 4 May 1996) p 9

[Report by Yelena Dikun and Anatoliy Kostyukov: "Merchants Haggle Over Prices While Goods Are Appraised"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the last day of April, Gennadiy Zyuganov received in his Duma office a delegation of businessmen who signed the well-known appeal to the aspirants for the presidential mandate.

Of the 13 signatories, seven showed up for the meeting with the CPRF leader: Boris Berezovskiy, president of the Logovaz group; Nikolay Mikhaylov, president of MAK Vympel; Sergey Muravlenko, president of the Yukos oil company; Leonid Nevzlin, president of the Rosprom company; Vladimir Potanin, president of Oneksimbank; Aleksandr Smolenskiy, president of the Stolichnyy Savings Bank; and Mikhail Fridman, chairman of the Alfa-group consortium board of directors. The interests of the Most-bank president were represented by his deputy Sergey Zverev. On the Communist side, in addition to Zyuganov, some senior Central Committee members sat down at the negotiating table: Valentin Kuptsov, Aleksandr Shabanov, Viktor Peshkov, and Viktor Ilyukhin.

The conversation took place behind tightly closed doors. A little more than an hour later, when the doors opened, the businessmen dashed away from the journalists waiting for them as though from plague, blurting out on the move: "Everything has been fine.... Wonderful." Aleksandr Smolenskiy even pretended that he was not a banker but deaf and dumb. Some minutes later Gennadiy

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Zyuganov emerged to meet with the press, but even he did not say much: "The exchange of opinion has been useful. We shall continue our consultations, although the search for compromises is the task of politicians not entrepreneurs."

In the next few days the sides continued to persistently evade comment — so persistently as to suggest that they had simply wasted their time.

Your OBSHCHAYA GAZETA correspondent managed to obtain some details about the closed meeting from a source maintaining friendly relations with the authors of the appeal. According to him the talk floundered from the start. Mr. Berezovskiy, who was the first to take the floor, obviously overdid it in complimenting Zyuganov: Apparently, he was a very serious person really concerned about Russia's interests, not about his own good. As a result, according to our informant, the domestic business captains came across rather as supplicants and their conversation was not on an equal basis.

The main proposal the businessmen brought to the Communist leader was concerned with the creation of a working group that would include, on a parity basis, people representing Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] and Gennadiy Andreyevich [Zyuganov]. These people should not hold any high state positions but be closely associated with respective the leaders. They will consider some topical questions and, using their confidential relations with their masters, convince them about the expediency of making a particular decision.

The visitors did not say it in so many words but, according to our source, indicated that in their opinion presidential elections are at present premature because they will only lead to unrest in society. The visitors said nothing specific about what Gennadiy Andreyevich should do by way of a political compromise or how Boris Nikolayevich will respond to that, although the Communists, intrigued by Mr. Berezovskiy's rather frank TV interview, had expected the guests to come up with a more substantive offering than a "working group" project.

Gennadiy Andreyevich listened to the petitioners in silence and [when they finished] he immediately steered the conversation to a different subject — the situation in the economy and the results of privatization — and spoke for a long time about the problems faced by the banks, showing a good awareness of his interlocutors' business.

When the entrepreneurs tried to elicit a clear-cut response to their proposal from him, however, the "Red candidate" said neither "yes" nor "no," observing that he is in principle open to any consultations for the good of Russia. In parting, Zyuganov presented his guests with booklets comprised of the CPRF program and his election platform.

According to OBSHCHAYA GAZETA's source the business leaders were not satisfied with the results of the meeting. Some of the authors of the appeal are no longer happy they have got involved in this hopeless undertaking, especially given that the president, whom the businessmen were to visit after Gennadiy Andreyevich, canceled the scheduled meeting. Apparently he deemed it inappropriate.

Indeed, the "mission by 13 capitalists" is turning indiscreetly ambiguous. Their attempt to prompt Yeltsin and Zyuganov toward "some serious mutual concessions and strategic political accords" (quotation from the appeal entitled "To Break the Deadlock!") points to at least two facts, rather unpleasant for Yeltsin: a) the business world leaders doubt his victory in the elections; and b) they recognize the legitimacy of the Communists' claims on power.

Translated into everyday language, the entrepreneurs' message to the president was as follows: God is our witness. We want to help you by word and money but your chances for victory are small and therefore we advise you not to fight but to give: There are plenty of "cushy places" in Russia and Communists are also human.

According to OBSHCHAYA GAZETA's source they proposed that to Yeltsin earlier in the year at a meeting organized by Anatoliy Chubays. The master of the Kremlin apparently was in no hurry to respond. Had the entrepreneurs' proposal been accepted immediately and unconditionally, their authors would not have had to write up and promulgate their appeal because publicity in such affairs is the last resort, the final means of making yourself heard.

It is hardly likely that Yeltsin was discouraged by the openly commercial character of the proposed deal (if the enemy does not give in, he is bought) or the scale of imminent sacrifice (several dozen portfolios ceded to Zyuganov for his voluntary withdrawal from the fight will not undermine the positions of the incumbent nomenklatura). It rather seems that the Kremlin has no idea about the technicalities of the undertaking. How, indeed, can Zyuganov's refusal to fight for the presidential chair be set up even if he agreed to accept the "smart money"? It is impossible to imagine that Gennadiy Andreyevich should scale down his campaign on the guarantee of future compensation or that the electorate should fail to see this or that this should not discredit both sides.

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A more realistic scenario — the two main rivals thwart the election campaign, declaring that elections are premature — is even more difficult to execute, if only because that would cost Zyuganov his political career while his risk is incomparable with the potential moral embarrassment for his reigning rival.

Certainly there are people in Zyuganov's inner circle who are ready to trade two birds in the bush for one in hand. According to OBSHCHAYA GAZETA sources some of them are trying to look for a "compromise" with the authorities over the head of their leader and without intermediaries. (Thus it is known about informal contacts between Zyuganov's deputy Valentin Kuptsov and Oleg Soskovets). Yet all of them realize that the masses will not understand them and without the masses they will lose their exchange value and the buyer.

On the whole the Communist top has related to the businessmen's mediation role with a mixed feeling of malice, joy, and fear. On one hand, it is a great pleasure to see the fat cats bow their heads obsequiously and to graciously promise them to expropriate only what has been stolen, but on the other, it is bad that such insider deals become publicly known: Their voters might think that their idol is in principle ready for a tradeoff.

The "group of 13" has rendered an unquestionable service only maybe to Yavlinskiy and the coalition forming around him. Recently the Yeltsin team played up Yabloko's mythical deal with the Communists. Now Yavlinskiy has good cause to get back at his detractors.

Russia: Zyuganov Departs for Visit to Germany

LD0505183496 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 5 May 96

[Video report by unidentified correspondent, including interview with Gennadiy Zyuganov, chairman of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, at Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow on 5 May; from the "Segodnya" newscast — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] [video shows Sheremetyevo-2 airport, interview with Zyuganov before departure] Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, flew out of Sheremetyevo-2 airport today on Lufthansa flight 3221 to Germany. He was making his first foreign trip as an official candidate in the Russian presidential election at the invitation of the Germano-Russian Forum, a public organization that is nevertheless sponsored by the German Government. Zyuganov intends to meet the leaders of all the factions in the Bundestag, as well as German businessmen over two days. The organizers of the visit asked Zyuganov to pay special attention to and relate in detail the foreign policy advocated by the bloc he leads.

[Correspondent, speaking to Zyuganov] What do you expect from this trip to Germany?

[Zyuganov] The last time, during the December elections, I was in Japan where I studied the sources of their [economic] miracle in Tokyo. Today I have consented to flying to Germany for one day in order to meet with business circles and, well, to strengthen ties.

[Correspondent] You were due to meet Boris Yeltsin today. Was that meeting cancelled then?

[Zyuganov] No. I do not believe that there was any rumor about a meeting. On the other hand, we are not ruling out such a meeting, especially since there is an appeal from 13 of the biggest entrepreneurs and bankers. I said a long time ago in the Duma and I am saying now that it is strange when the three branches of authority do not get together, do not consult, and do not take exhaustive measures when there is a crisis of the gravest kind and war in Chechnya. We are ready for that kind of dialogue.

Russia: 'Itogi' Warns Germany of Zyuganov's Split Personality

LD0505211896 Moscow NTV in Russian 1700 GMT 5 May 96

[From the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Studio announcer Yevgeniy Kiselev] Communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov has set off abroad in the capacity of an official Russian presidential candidate for the first time.

His previous solo visit was to Davos where, at the World Economic Forum, Zyuganov tried to appear to the elite of the West as a rose-colored social democrat who has rejected once and for all the ideals of Bolshevism and is ready to continue market reforms. However, that was not to the liking of many orthodox communists who thought that Zyuganov had licked the boots of imperialists in Davos. Moreover, according to our information, Zyuganov was forced to give up an important visit to the United States that was planned soon after Davos so as not to anger the radicals or jeopardize the fate of the left-wing coalition. Zyuganov may have gone to Germany today as a private individual possibly out of these considerations.

It is curious to note that Zyuganov was invited there a long time ago, but he agreed to go only a week or two ago when his ratings and the ratings of Yeltsin were practically equal and the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation required extra points in the struggle for the president's seat.

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One gets the impression that Zyuganov began to seek international recognition with particular persistence after the objective foreign policy success of the incumbent president: Yeltsin's successful visit to China and his no less successful G-7 Moscow meeting, which now may become G-8 with the addition of Russia, precisely between the first and second round of presidential elections.

Against this background, it is particularly noticeable that Zyuganov's relations with the West are not going well somehow, to such an extent that things look ridiculous. Taking childish offense, Zyuganov begins to argue that during the visit to Moscow by President of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski they had a long one-to-one meeting, not any old short exchange of niceties over diplomatic snacks.

U.S. President Clinton did not favor Zyuganov with a separate audience at all, seating him at the same table not only with other presidential candidates, but with Anatoliy Chubays, whom Zyuganov cannot stand.

Now, Zyuganov has decided to try his luck in Germany. Those witty of word reacted at once: Russian communists blazed the trail to power through Germany a long time ago! [passage omitted]

Zyuganov, recently, has become more and more reminiscent of the split-personality character penned by Stevenson: Sometimes he acts like the good Dr. Jekyll, sometimes the evil Mr. Hyde, sometimes showing the West his tolerance of that holiest of holy's — private property — or demonstrating to his supporters at rallies that he hates both the West and private property.

It is most likely that the Germans will see again the good, rose-colored Zyuganov. But, nonetheless, let us take it upon ourselves to predict with a high degree of certainty that Zyuganov will not be able to reply to what are most important questions for German politicians, for instance, will the communists, should they come to power, still recognize the independence of Ukraine, with whom Russia is obliged to divide the strategic fleet? Or will Zyuganov respect the sovereignty of former Soviet republics, and the Baltic countries in the first instance? And most importantly, the West, and not just the West, but Russia, too, want to know if Zyuganov intends to respect private property. [passage omitted]

Zyuganov is not answering the question about whether he will combat inflation — and if not, where will communists get the money from? For if there is a change in economic policy, Russia cannot expect the deferral of repayments of its many billions in debts. The Communist Party platform does not say anything about political freedom or a multiparty system, either.

In Germany, Zyuganov will have either to promise distinctly to preserve them, or to leave without saying a word. [passage omitted]

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Announces Economic Program

LD0505172196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1420 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 5 (Interfax) — Leader of the Liberal Democratic party Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, one of the candidates in the race for the Russian presidency, made public the provisions of his economic program on Sunday.

He favors a mixed economy, "understanding that the conditions in Russia demand the presence of the state sector," he said at a news conference in the State Duma.

His economic priority is to slash taxes and reduce the number of different taxes from 19 to two or three. "Neither the state nor the private sectors can exist today because of the abundance of taxes today," said Zhirinovskiy.

He believes that enterprises of all types of property should have tax equality.

His economic program will be made public fully soon, he said.

Zhirinovskiy said that he considers the election victory of either Communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov or current President Boris Yeltsin equally dangerous for the country.

Speaking skeptically about the likelihood of Yeltsin's success in the elections, Zhirinovskiy forecasts a sharp aggravation of the social situation in Russia if the current president wins. "The Communists will rouse people. Acts of sabotage and resistance, including the use of force, are possible," he said.

On the other hand, according to Zhirinovskiy, a Communist victory "is also frightening since the program of the Communists is aimed at building Communist society, and we know what that is like."

Zhirinovskiy is sure that only he has a chance "to catch up and overtake Zyuganov."

Russia: Lebed Not To Give Up in Race for Presidency

LD0505202296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1733 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 5 (Interfax) — Duma deputy and presidential hopeful Gen. Aleksandr Lebed does not plan to use his free air time from May 15 to 20 to announce his withdrawal from the election race, Lebed's election committee told Interfax Sunday.

The media reports about Lebed's plans to give up in favor of Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy are untrue, a spokesman for the election committee said.

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The committee has formed a schedule for the use of the free airtime, he said. Lebed will make several statements about his election program and answer people's questions, he said.

Television and radio will broadcast materials about the presidential contender that have been approved by Lebed himself, the spokesman said.

Russia: Lebed: No Agreement To Be Signed With Fedorov, Yavlinskiy

LD0305162796 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 3 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Studio announcer, following report on Yeltsin in Yarovslavl] Other presidential candidates did not make themselves heard today, but there were events connected with them.

General Aleksandr Lebed's press service has announced that no agreement between Lebed, Svyatoslav Fedorov, and Grigoriy Yavlinskiy will be signed on 15 May — thereby denying yesterday's INTERFAX report.

Russia: Lebed, Fedorov Expected To Step Down for Yavlinskiy

LD0505094496 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0700 GMT 5 May 96

[Report by Tatyana Khudobina; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Now, election news. The Central Electoral Commission is today holding a draw for television air time for political broadcasts. IZVESTIYA expects that in one such broadcast Lebed and Fedorov will withdraw their nominations in favor of Yavlinskiy. Observers expect this to happen between 15 and 20 May. According to the same newspaper, President Yeltsin is to have a meeting with Yavlinskiy shortly to make him a very serious proposal. Yavlinskiy himself does not rule out a possibility of such a proposal, but believes that any talks held with the coalition today should consider it as a whole, that is, they should include Lebed and Fedorov.

Russia: Presidential Candidates Draw Lots To Appear on Television

LD0505162396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1607 GMT 5 May 96

[By Igor Belskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 5 (Itar-Tass) — Free air time provided by state radio and television companies to presidential candidates in a canvassing campaign was distributed today among the participants in the presidential race.

A ceremony of drawing lots conducted by the Central Election Board and the Russian teleradio companies was attended by representatives of eleven registered candidates to the Russian presidency. In accordance with the law on elections the candidates contesting the presidential post will be given free air time on television from May 14 until June 14. Three state-owned TV channels will offer 30 minutes on the air to each of the candidates. The Russian public television (ORT) and the Russian state-owned teleradio company "Rossiya" offers air time to the candidates in the morning and in the evening, and the St. Petersburg TV company "Petersburg-Channel 5" — in the evening, only.

After the lots were drawn it was declared that the first candidate to appear on the air is Director General of the "Reforma" Fund Martin Shakkum who will address the audiences both in the morning and in the evening on May 14. Communist candidate Gennadiy Zyuganov will be the last to canvass on ORT television and "Petersburg-Channel-5" late on June 14. President Yeltsin will first appear on TV in his canvassing campaign on May 21.

"Rossiya" company declared when the lots were drawn that on Monday, it would distribute extra air time among candidates for pay. Air time for extra pay has already been claimed by candidates Vladimir Bryntsalov and Martin Shakkum.

Russia: 'Itogi' Views Latest Presidential Election Poll Results

LD0505185096 Moscow NTV in Russian 1700 GMT 5 May 96

[From the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Studio announcer Yevgeniy Kiselev] The main news of the Russian preelection campaign is the results of the latest public opinion poll.

The sociologists' data once again confirms the growth in the popularity of the incumbent president.

NTV presents the latest information of sociologists on whom the citizens of Russia will vote for if the presidential elections took place today.

The independent ROMIR institute — the Institute for Russian Public Opinion and Market Research, and a member of the most authoritative international association Gallup international — carried out for "Itogi" on 20-21 April, a nationwide representative poll on the theme: Which of the candidates will you most likely vote for in the presidential elections that are to take place on 16 June 1996?

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In all, 1,500 voters at 160 points in 39 republics and regions of Russia were polled. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percent.

All the ratings that we will give now are calculated on the basis of those who today are quite sure that they will turn out to vote. Incidentally, the numbers of such people is simply unprecedented — 86 percent of those polled say that on 16 June they will turn out to vote.

And here is how their sympathies are divided today.

Former USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev has the lowest rating enjoyed by the main candidates. On 16 June, 2 percent of those polled who have already decided to vote will vote for him.

Five percent of the active electorate intend to support LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy; 6 percent — Svyatoslav Fedorov; 7 percent Aleksandr Lebed; and the same percentage, 7 percent, for Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy.

Finally, the most important result of the latest ROMIR poll: The number of those who intend on 16 June to vote for Boris Yeltsin, at the end of April finally equaled the number of those who intend to support Gennadiy Zyuganov. The two leaders of the preelection presidential race have 28 percent each.

In actual fact, this was expected. According to ROMIR data, which incidentally, has been confirmed by the data of a number of nationwide public opinion polls carried out by the most authoritative sociological services, at the beginning of March, when Yeltsin's preelection began gradually to get off the ground, the president's rate began to rise a bit and gradually began to overtake Zyuganov's, which it seems reached a kind of ceiling back in March.

This is how it looked; on 10 March — 26 percent of those who had already decided to vote were for Zyuganov, 17 percent were for Yeltsin; 24 March — 27 percent were for Zyuganov, 19 percent were for Yeltsin; 7 April — 27 percent were for Zyuganov, 22 percent for Yeltsin; 21 April — 28 percent for Zyuganov, 22 percent for Yeltsin. Finally, 28 April — 28 percent of the active electorate were for Zyuganov and the same number — 28 percent for Yeltsin.

The question arises as to how the rather sharp rise in Yeltsin's ratings over a week, plus 6 percent, can be explained.

The explanation is most likely this: During the previous survey, the names of Yegor Gaydar and Viktor Chernomyrdin were still in the list of possible presidential candidates, although it was already known that they did not intend to run. In total they were supported by 5 percent of the active electorate polled.

Now that the registration of candidates has ended in the Central Electoral Commission, and it has become official that Gaydar and Chernomyrdin are not taking part in the elections, the last ROMIR poll was the first time that the names of Gaydar and Chernomyrdin were excluded from the list of candidates.

It is most likely that the sympathy of the majority of the 5 percent of those polled who supported them during the previous poll has now gone over to Yeltsin and hence the jump in the president's ratings that has placed him on an equal footing with Zyuganov.

And another, even more important result: For the first time, ROMIR obtained information that Yeltsin may beat Zyuganov in a second round of the presidential elections.

Let me remind you that in the previous poll, on 21 April, showed that if Zyuganov and Yeltsin met in a second round, the leader of the communists would win with 40 percent of the votes against 36 percent. During the latest poll, the mirror-opposite result was obtained: 36 percent of the active electorate polled by ROMIR said that in a second round they will vote for Zyuganov, 40 percent for Yeltsin.

There is no doubt that the growth in the rise of the rating of the president of Russia should add to Boris Yeltsin's confidence. At the same time, it will probably be too early to draw final conclusions.

All sociological surveys carried out in Russia now show that a rather stable number of respondents, approximately 15 percent, have still not decided for whom they will vote in the elections. They have already decided to vote, but they have not yet chosen their candidate. World experience confirms that up to 30 percent, that is practically one-third of those who intend to vote, that is a reality, make their decision on the final day when they are at the ballot box. [passage omitted]

There is no guarantee now that some of those polled, while stating that they are ready to vote for Yeltsin, will not in the end vote for Zhirinovskiy or Zyuganov.

On the other hand, the objective tendency for Yeltsin's ratings to grow stronger is evident and this tendency for growth, if it is extrapolated, will most likely next week bring a greater strengthening of the president's position.

An individual sociologist can be mislead, but you will agree that it is difficult to falsify an entire trend.

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Baltics: Report on Baltic Council Joint Declaration

LD0405132496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1255 GMT 4 May 96

[By Nikolay Vukolov, Gennadiy Yezhov, Igor Pshenichnikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VISBY (GOTLAND, SWEDEN) May 4 (ITAR-TASS) — A joint Declaration was adopted today by the prime ministers of member countries of the Council of Baltic Sea States [CBSS] at their meeting, which has come to a close in the city of Visby, in the Gotland Island. They supported the cooperation process in the Baltic Sea region, laying special emphasis on promoting the development of the region as a zone of cooperation, democracy and market-oriented economy.

Participants in the meeting expressed the intention to ensure for the Baltic Region an appropriate place in the new Europe, a continent of cooperation and integration. They pointed to the importance for European stability of even closer ties between the Baltic Region and the European Union. In this connection the prime ministers of the CBSS welcomed the Initiative With Regard to the Baltic Sea, drawn up by the European Commission on the instructions of the European Union and presented by Chairman of the European Commission Jacques Santer.

The prime ministers reiterated their continued respect for the supremacy of the law, democracy, human rights and basic freedoms, as well as their support for the Commissar of the CBSS on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, including the rights of people belonging to national minorities. They went on record in favour of the consolidation of mutual trust, stability and civil security in the Baltic Region through cooperation between the civilian authorities and the struggle against organised crime.

It was decided to create a special group for the struggle against organised crime, subordinated directly to the heads of government, which should work out a package of measures for strengthening cooperation between police agencies of the Baltic Sea states.

The Declaration includes a list of measures to be taken on the basis of the programme of actions. These include support for Estonia, Latvia and Poland in their preparations for joining the European Union; support for the early ratification of the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the European Union; the strengthening of cooperation between the police, frontier guards, customs, immigration, coastal guards and rescue services of the Baltic Sea states; support for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia in their preparations for joining the WTO [World Trade Organization]; the recognition of the new Russian law on a special economic zone in the Kaliningrad Region as a contribution to the liberalisation of trade and to economic development in the Baltic Region in general; modernization of transport systems in the region, including their integration in trans-European networks; activisation of cooperation in the sphere of power generation and nuclear security; restoration and maintenance of the ecological balance of the Baltic Sea and the need for updating and strengthening the Joint Comprehensive Programme of the Improvement of Environment of the Baltic Sea; the evaluation of ecological risks, connected with oil refining and transportation.

Participants in the meeting urged the CBSS to work out and adopt at a session of the Council on the level of foreign ministers of member states a programme of action in the spheres, specified by the heads of government at their Visby meeting. The session of the Council on the level of foreign ministers will be held in the city of Kalmar on July 2-3, 1996.

CIS: Kazakh President Leaves for Bishkek Tripartite Meeting

LD0605053596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0300 GMT 6 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Akimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Almaty, 6 May (ITAR-TASS) — Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev departed for Bishkek today to attend today's scheduled meeting with the president of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev, and the president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov.

Commenting on the forthcoming meeting of the leaders of the three Central Asian countries, the Kazakh head of state's press secretary told the ITAR-TASS correspondent that the practical steps by the three countries to increase their assistance to Tajikistan in guarding the border with Afghanistan will most likely evoke the greatest international response. The presidents intend to begin the direct formation of a collective Central Asian battalion (Tsentrazbat). It will be called upon to perform peacekeeping functions on Tajikistan's outer border under the aegis of the United Nations and will comprise 500 carefully trained and well equipped soldiers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 5 May

LD0505132996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0452 GMT 5 May 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 5 (ITAR-TASS) — President Boris Yeltsin is ready to meet

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leader of the Yabloko bloc Grigoriy Yavlinsky over the next few days "to make most serious proposals to him," the IZVESTIA newspaper writes today, referring to a source, close to the president's election race headquarters.

"Although the source did not specify what proposals can be made, the first and only idea which comes to one's mind, is the post of prime minister in exchange for support of Yavlinsky's voters," the daily claims.

Examining possibilities of "the third force" (Lebed-Fedorov-Yavlinsky), the newspaper writes that on May 5, the three presidential candidates will draw lots, on the results of which they will get free broadcasting time on television.

"Speaking over television, Alexander Lebed and Svyatslav Fedorov will withdraw their candidacies in favour of Grigori Yavlinsky. This will take place between May 15 and 20, as it was promised," Izvestia forecasts.

The ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI newspaper's commentary also deals with "the third force." It claims that the winner in "the trio" will be determined not by economic, political or programme planks but by "a popularity rating."

The PRAVDA newspaper runs an interview with leader of the Russian Communist Party GennadiY Zyuganov entitled "Patriotic power will restore justice."

The KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA newspaper carries its own investigation where it suggests that Dudayev and some other prominent figures in the Chechen leadership died and will continue to die "as a result of struggle for control over routes of smuggling Afghan, Burmese and Colombian narcotics to Europe, Russia and America."

IZVESTIYA examines the situation which developed in the country after Yeltsin's decree on measures to restore savings of Russian citizens. The daily quotes opinions by experts from the Finance Ministry, the State Duma (Russian parliament lower house) and the Institute of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

The same newspaper starts publishing a series of materials by well-known journalist and politician YuriY Chernichenko "Road through the village."

The author gives an introduction to scenes from modern countryside life in the Nizhnly Novgorod and the Tula regions as well as the Krasnodar Territory, claiming that the Russian village has not two but only one road.

The road runs through the village, leading naturally from the past to the future. However, Chernichenko notes, you may move forward or backward even along the only road. "Serfdom is behind, and freedom is in front."

Analyzing the results of the Armenian visit by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, the KRASNAYA ZVEZDA newspaper writes that "a coalition group of troops is being created" in Transcaucasia.

The RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA newspaper describes a scandal in the Nizhiny Novgorod Region where, according to the newspaper, depu ties of the regional legislative assambly who, without leaving any impressive results of their activities over the past two years, decided to prolong their powers for another two years.

The ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA newspaper called Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov "Man of the Week." "'Opening' Moscow for Muscovites on May 1 and freeing Moscow sights of interest from controllers and conductors, the mayor noted in passing that it is a Russian tradition not for the people to please their superiors with festive marches on big holidays but, on the contrary, for the fathers of the nation and the city to treat their fellow countrymen in their own manner," the daily writes.

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 6 May

LD0605055096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0539 GMT 6 May 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW May 6 (ITAR-TASS) - Follows a review of Monday's Moscow-based Russian newspapers dated May 6.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, IZVESTIYA and KRASNAYA ZVEZDA frontpage accounts of the May 5 start of celebrations in the Red Square marking the tercentenary of the Russian Navy. The organisers of the gala are the Russian and Moscow governments, the Defence Ministry, the Main Headquarters of the Navy and the Goskontsert concert-arranging State-run enterprise.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA carries an interview with Sakhalin Governor Igor Farkhutdinov, member of the Federation Council, who describes Sakhalin people's reactions to interparty cataclysms and their preferences.

The newspaper also writes about privatisation by-effects on the example of the sale of the Bolshevichka clothing complex at give-away prices, and a subsequent cancellation of the privatisation.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on North Caucasus health resort chiefs' inviting people to spend holidays there.

"We guarantee safety of holidays at the Caucasian spas. The situation in Zheleznovodsk, Kislovodsk, Essentuki, and Pyatigorsk is much better than in any region

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of Russia," Aleksey Kulakovskiy, the Caucasian Spas administration chief, told the newspaper.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on presidential elections.

In an article headlined "Communist Party faction in the State Duma chooses confrontation", Valeriy Nikolaskiy analyses the tactics of the parliamentary work of the Communist Party faction and arrives at a conclusion that the outcome of the politicised approach to legislation-drafting activities, the dominance of the interests of individual persons and factions over the interests and requirements of the State, and the lack of due professionalism is that more than 50 legislative acts adopted by the Duma of the previous convocation enter into conflict with one another.

IZVESTIYA on a prospective peace plan for Chechnya.

The newspaper's special correspondent Irina Dementyeva has met with Dudayev's associates Usman Imayev, Akhmed Zakayev, and Aslan Maskhadov and conveys the opinion of these authoritative Ichkerian military leaders and political figures about a prospective plan to settle the conflict in Chechnya.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA comments on Kazakhstan's reaction to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's remarks about the historical destinies of Russia and Kazakhstan and the present-day problems of the two countries and peoples.

Some official bodies in the republic view Solzhenitsyn's remarks, published in the newspaper recently, as a sufficient ground for the expulsion of Komsomolskaya Pravda from the republic.

Dmitriy Shevarov, who comments on the incident, expresses hope that there will be no scandal and that a true dialogue will not be substituted by a ruling issued by the Prosecutor's Office. The analyst calls for a frank dialogue between Nursultan Nazarbayev and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

TRUD on the problems of the Russian aircraft industry.

Viktor Trubitsin, the writer of the article, analyses the causes and consequences of the active expansion of Western firms into Russia against the background of the crisis in the national aircraft building industry.

"It is not for the sake of money that the West offers its aircraft to us but it does so because new jobs are created there at the expense of our unemployment," the analyst writes. "The way out is urgently to pass a law on leasing, which should include clauses on State protection of our industry," he maintains.

TRUD on Russian army woes.

One of the problems, a poor clothing and equipment support for the servicemen, is the subject of an interview with Lieutenant-General Mikhail Khrenov, Head of the Russian Defence Ministry's Central Clothing and Equipment Supply Directorate.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA on lack of funds for Russian army food.

The army has not been provided with funds to feed the soldier, the article says. Lieutenant-General Vyacheslav Savinov, Head of the Russian Defence Ministry's Central Food Supply Directorate, states that as of mid-April not a single copeck was assigned for the feeding of servicemen.

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Russia: Chernomyrdin Sees Nothing Good in NATO Expansion

LD0405144196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1410 GMT 4 May 96

[By Nikolay Vukolov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VISBY, May 4 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin today spoke to a news conference concluding a meeting of government heads of the Council of Baltic States (CBS) in Visby, Sweden.

He described the meeting as fruitful.

"Many issues which seemed unresolvable earlier do not look it today," Chernomyrdin said.

He told the conference that he had held bilateral meetings in fact with all prime ministers attending the meeting to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Addressing the conference, Chernomyrdin spoke of NATO's plan to expand eastward.

"If NATO's eastward enlargement is accomplished, this will not bring anything good for the development of cooperation and the strengthening of stability in the Baltic region," Chernomyrdin said.

"If NATO was a charity, Russia would not have objected, but NATO is a military organisation," he added.

Chernomyrdin said the meeting had planned an important conference on fighting organised crime in the region. In particular, an operational group of personal representatives of prime ministers is to be set up to build up the cooperation in regional anti-crime programmes.

Chernomyrdin said the group would make an account to the next top-level meeting of CBS state members in 1997.

Later in the day, Chernomyrdin will travel on from Sweden to Finland on a working visit.

Russia: Chernomyrdin: Attitude to Russian Speakers 'Unacceptable'

LD0305130496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1135 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Nikolay Vukolov and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Stockholm, 3 May (ITAR-TASS) — "We will never agree to the attitude to the Russian speaking population in the Baltic countries as it exists now, never," Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said at a news conference in Stockholm today.

Violation of the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia, and above all in Estonia, was touched on during his talks with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson. Chernomyrdin said: "I realize that an understanding that not everything is normal in these countries and that human rights are being violated there is also present on the Swedish side. At least they are aware of this."

In the past few years Russia has had different relations with Lithuania to those with Estonia and Latvia, Chernomyrdin said. "Our cooperation is developing fairly well and a dialogue is being conducted as should be the case." The prime minister believes that "relations with Latvia are changing for the better."

"As a whole, I must say that we are fairly tolerant, we are neighbors, we must live normally," the Russian prime minister continued. "The Baltic countries are sovereign states, they are entitled to take up any position but we will never agree to the present attitude to the Russian-speaking population. After all, it should not be the case in a law-governed state that human rights for some people are of one kind and a different kind for others. What are the people who have found themselves in these countries to blame for? Essentially, they were born there and many took part in the restoration of the economy."

Is Russian military intervention in the Baltic countries possible in the event of them joining NATO? "I think, first of all, that they will not join NATO," the Russian prime minister replied. "And, second, no one is raising the issue of military intervention. This is quite simply ruled out."

Russia: Moscow Opposed to Croatia Joining NATO

LD0305184396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1751 GMT 3 May 96

[By Andrey Naryshkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ZAGREB, May 3 (Itar-Tass) — Russia will not object Croatia's joining NATO's Partnership for Peace programme, however it opposes the alliance's enlargement by admitting Balkan states, visiting Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov told Tass in Zagreb on Friday.

"Russia opposes NATO's expansion, no matter which country it involves. We consider that stability in Europe should be built by setting up a model of European security instead of extending the alliance," Ivanov said.

Speaking of the purpose of his visit, he said he intended to hold "large-scale consultations on both bilateral relations and major international problems."

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Russia advocates broad and constructive relations with Croatia. "We want the Balkans to be a stability zone, which would be in the interests of European security on the whole," he said.

Russia calls for strict adherence to the Dayton agreements. It intends to make a constructive contribution to their implementation, he said.

Zagreb is trying to have Russia take a "well-balanced approach to the problems of the region, in the first place at the level of the United Nations Security Council," the Croatian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "There are no suspended questions between us, and chances of developing mutually beneficial economic relations are as good as never before," Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic after talks with Ivanov.

Granic expressed hope that Moscow would play "an even more active role" in the normalisation of relations between Croatia and Serbia, including Western Slavonia's entry into Croatia.

Ivanov, in turn, said that the statement concerning "Moscow's well-balanced approach belongs to the past, not to the present."

The Russian diplomat will also meet Croatian President Franjo Tudjman for consultations. He will hand over Russian President Boris Yeltsin's letter to him.

Russia: Primakov Sums Up Results of Council of Europe Meeting

LD0305192796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1720 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Viktor Khrekov and Igor Shchegolev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg, 3 May — All the member countries of the Council of Europe agree that after Russia joined this organization, its role and the scale of tasks facing it have increased, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov said, summing up the results of the sitting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe that has ended in Strasbourg. He said the Russian Federation will fulfill all its financial obligations to the Council of Europe and, beginning from 1997, its financial contribution to the budget of the organization will be at the level of major states such as Germany, Great Britain, France, and Italy.

Commenting at the request of an ITAR-TASS correspondent on Estonia's chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Russian foreign minister expressed the hope that these responsibilities will help the Estonian leaders to overcome a tendency toward double standards in dealing with certain issues. During the session Primakov told the heads of the foreign policy departments of the Council of Europe that the Russian Federation expected more consistent and energetic moves on the part of the Council of Europe to protect the right of the Russian-speaking population outside Russia.

Russia is taking a course toward the abolition of capital punishment in line with the pledges made at joining the Council of Europe, the minister said. However, the time has not yet come for such a step, he added. He said that a more realistic view should be taken with regard to the carrying out of death sentences passed, for instance, for killing and raping tens of persons. If such sentences are not carried out, this could result in misunderstandings in society, Primakov believes.

At the same time, he referred to official information released by the Russian Interior Ministry saying that in 1996 the number of murders decreased by 10 percent as compared with 1995. If this trend becomes stable, it will be easier for Russia to fulfill her obligations to the Council of Europe, the Russian foreign minister said.

The minister also said that it was topical for the Council of Europe to be more involved in ensuring European security, taking into account that security has other aspects in addition to the military one. Thus, for instance, the Council of Europe could and should make an important contribution to the civilian stage of the peaceful settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in connection with the forthcoming parliamentary elections. In Russia's opinion, the Council of Europe should also strengthen ties with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Russia: Primakov Reiterates Chechen Peace Policy

LD0305163396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1550 GMT 3 May 96

[By Viktor Khrekov and Igor Shchegolev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STRASBOURG, May 3 (Itar-Tass) — Russia will continue to pursue the policy towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Chechnya. But this is not an easy road, since a solution depends not only on one side, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov told journalists here on Friday. He is attending the current meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Council of Europe here.

The death of Dzhokhar Dudayev has brought about "some uncertainty and a pause" in Chechnya, Primakov said. Concrete contact will be made with the other side, which can be widely-representative, as soon as it determines it attitude, the Russian Minister said. He explained that he means negotiators who will represent people who are fighting arms in hand against federal authorities.

The divide in Chechnya exists not only between the federal forces and the Chechen militants but also inside

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the Chechen community, Primakov pointed out. His opinion is that the intra-Chechen dialogue is now going on.

Primakov confirmed Moscow's readiness to discuss any issues relevant to the settlement of the crisis, including the one on Chechnya's status.

However, Russia does not differ from other states which regard their territorial integrity as the supreme value, he stressed.

Commenting on the CE's [Council of Europe] increasing attention to the Chechnya topic, he said Russia attaches great significance to European public opinion which is expressed by the Council.

According to him, nobody supports Chechnya's separatist drive or its secession from the Russian Federation. However, some voices are heard against the measures federal forces have to take in Chechnya, regarding them as disproportionate, he said.

Europe has not faced acts of terrorism of such a wide scope which need to be suppressed with large-scale military action, he said.

We, too, are in anguish when civilians fall victim during these operations, he said.

Russia: 'Whole Series' of British Diplomats To Be Expelled

LD0605101596 Moscow INFORMATSIONNOYE AGENTSTVO EKHO MOSKVY in Russian 0954 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [no dateline as received] — The Ekho Moskvy radio station has learned that a whole series of staffers at the British Embassy in Russia will be declared persona non grata in the very near future and expelled from the country.

British Ambassador Andrew Wood is now at the Russian Foreign Ministry, to which he was summoned. A strong protest has been lodged with the ambassador about the fact that staffers of the British special services are conducting illegal activities under the cover of the diplomatic mission.

Russia: Chernomyrdin in Talks With Finnish Premier

LD0405193196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1848 GMT 4 May 96

[By Vladimir Mostovets and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] HELSINKI, May 4 (Itar-Tass) - Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, on a working visit to Finland, is in talks with his Finnish counterpart Paavo Lipponen.

"Stake on Russia," Chernomyrdin said at the opening of the talks.

He stressed that "during the recent years our country has suceeded to move well on in economic reforms".

Lipponen said Finland's membership of the European Union provides it with additional opportunities to build up its ties with the eastern neighbour and with substantial resources to finance the projects of cooperation with Russia.

Trade between Russia and Finland has grown by 23 per cent in 1995.

Chernomyrdin and Lipponen had a 20-minute face-to-face talk which was followed by a broader attendance of officials, experts and businessmen.

The focus was on bilateral trade and joint projects in power, construction, transport, communications and environment fields.

The largest of these is the construction of an oil pipeline to link Kireshi, Primorsk and Pori.

Once implemented, this project would allow the refining of Russia's crude in the Finnish port of Pori. This would relieve Russia's oil terminals and increase its oil exports.

Chernomyrdin's talks in Finland are expected to address border cooperation, the setting up of new check-points.

A package of accords is to be signed today to broaden the Russian-Finnish trade.

Russia: Finland's Nonalignment to Military Alliances Welcomed

LD0405205396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1921 GMT 4 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Vladimir Mostovets and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Helsinki, 4 May — Russia's and Finland's views on the problems of European security mostly coincide and the Russian leaders welcome the position of nonalignment to military alliances that the Finnish state adheres to, Viktor Chernomyrdin, chairman of the government of the Russian Federation, who is currently in Helsinki on a working visit, said today during a brief conversation with journalists.

Speaking about NATO's plans for eastward expansion, Chernomyrdin stressed that Russia is not going to dictate its conditions to other countries, but it firmly believed that these moves were not in the interests of

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security in Europe. Since now, for the first time, we have an opportunity to build interstate relations on a non-bloc basis without mutual confrontation, he said.

At the same time, the Russian prime minister said that Russia is prepared to cooperate with NATO. But the forms of this cooperation still needed to be thought out, he added.

Russia: Finland: Chernomyrdin Welcomes EU Initiative on Baltics

LD0405214196 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1405 GMT 4 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Nikolay Vukolov, Gennadiy Yezhov, and Igor Pshenichnikov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Visby, (Gotland Island, Sweden), 4 May — "The 'initiative on the Baltic' presented to us by the Chairman of the European Commission can only be welcomed." This is how Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin commented in an exclusive interview to ITAR-TASS today on the European Union's plan to play a more active role in the development of cooperation in the Baltic.

This intention, in the opinion of the head of the Russian Government, testifies to the growth of the importance of the Baltic and countries situated there for Europe and for the integration processes taking place on the continent.

This approach, Viktor Chernomyrdin said, opens up opportunities both for deepening cooperation and for the quickest possible solution to the existing problems connected, in particular, with the expansion of the EU to take in the Baltic states. A number of countries joining the EU and the changes in the commercial and political patterns connected with this could not fail to affect traditional bilateral economic relations. Certain difficulties had arisen. Russia, he stressed, is making efforts to correct the situation and is adapting its trade to the new conditions.

Expansion of the EU to take in the Baltic states gives a special urgency to the question of the earliest possible ratification of the agreement on cooperation and partnership between the Russian Federation and the European Union. "Russia-EU" partnership and cooperation is undoubtedly of all-European significance, the Russian prime minister pointed out.

It was necessary also to remove as soon as possible such anachronisms as keeping Russia's status as a country with a state system of trade and the system of tough quotas on our exports. This will undoubtedly have a positive effect on the development of Russia's commercial and economic cooperation with its partners in the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the EU as a whole.

Russia considers, Viktor Chernomyrdin said, that the Council of the Baltic Sea States can play a positive role as a link between the EU and the Baltic countries.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Ends 'Important and Productive' Finland Visit

LD0505163496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1524 GMT 5 May 96

[By Vladimir Mostovets and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] HELSINKI, May 5 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Prime Minister's visit to Finland which ended today might be rightfully described as "important and productive." This opinion was expressed by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and his Finnish counterpart Paavo Lipponen who both attended a presentation ceremony of a new car "Euro-Samara" assembled at a Finnish auto works.

The talks held by the two Prime Ministers on Saturday were highly productive. As a result of the talks the sides signed a package of Russo-Finnish agreements intended to give an impetus to further development of trade and economic contacts and create favourable conditions for Finnish investments into Russia. The signed documents include agreements on investment guarantees, agreements preventing charging double income tax, on deliveries of "special property" from Russia into Finland and expenditures involved, on a new check point to be established on the Russo-Finnish border and a memorandum on the participation of Finnish organizations in Russian projects.

The agreements reached in Helsinki during the Russian Prime Minister's visit are necessary to maintain a positive balance in the trade turnover between Russia and Finland, which exceeded 20 per cent in 1995, closing at 4,4 billion roubles, Russian Minister for foreign economic relations Oleg Davydov told Itar-Tass. The minister said that during the talks the sides discussed ways of removing barriers which impede the development of cooperation, problems connected with the organization of free trade zones, improvement of contacts on the border and mutual restriction of all kinds of quotas and customs duties. Besides, the Russian government declared that it was prepared to give guarantees to Finnish investors to back major joint projects, the minister said.

An agreement on the deliveries of Russia's latest air-defence systems to Finland referred to in a diplomatic language as "special property" should be mentioned separately. Both Russian and Finnish sources said that

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at issue were "BUK-M1" anti-aircraft-missile systems which Russia would supply to Finland to recompense its outstanding debt worth 5.5 million Finnish marks.

During a meeting with journalists on Saturday Chernomyrdin did not go into details of the agreement, but stressed that cooperation between the two countries in the military-industrial sector would continue since it was of benefit both to Russia and Finland.

On Sunday afternoon, Viktor Chernomyrdin met Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. During the talks between them which continued an hour longer than scheduled the two sides discussed a wide range of issues pertaining both to international and bilateral relations. After the talks with the Finnish president Chernomyrdin went to Vantaa airport and took a plane home.

Russia: Chinese Chief of General Staff Visits St. Petersburg

LD0305130996 St. Petersburg Fifth Channel Television Network in Russian 1155 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Chinese military delegation is visiting St. Petersburg.

[Correspondent] An agreement on strategic cooperation between our countries was signed during Boris Yeltsin's stay in People's Republic of China. Exchanges of military delegations have long been a scheduled feature, however.

A Chinese military delegation led by General Fu Quanyou, chief of general staff of the Chinese Armed Forces, has paid a visit to Colonel General Seleznev, commander of the armed forces of Leningrad Military District. The visit is mainly for the purposes of familiarization. Tomorrow the representatives of the PRC armed forces plan to visit the Naval Academy, after which they are scheduled to leave for Volgograd.

It should be pointed out that St. Petersburg and Volgograd are traditionally on the itinerary of Chinese military men visiting our country, evidently as a mark of respect for the heroic past of these cities.

The main objective of the PRC chief of general staff's visit is Moscow, where he will go after the obligatory trip round.

Russia: Foreign Ministry Officials Comment on ROK Minister's Visit

SK0505123096 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Korean 1200 GMT 4 May 96

[From the "Today's World" Program; passages within quotation marks are recorded in Russian, fading into Korean translation]

[FBIS Translated Text] As we have already reported, ROK Foreign Minister Kong No-myong will arrive in Moscow on 5 May.

A reporter from our station met with (Valentin Moiseyev), director of the ROK Bureau of the Russian Foreign Ministry. He said the following:

[Moiseyev] "The ROK foreign minister will discuss a variety of issues with Russian representatives during his visit to Russia. They will discuss, first of all, bilateral relations, the situation on the peninsula, and bilateral cooperation in the international arena. No official document will be signed. However, all agreements to be reached during the talks will define the bilateral relations for the immediate future."

Responding to how the Russia-ROK relations are, he said the following:

[Moiseyev] "Five years have passed since the two countries established diplomatic relations. In a departure from the mutual hostility, we have promoted diversified cooperation in the political, economic, and cultural areas in those five years. The cooperation is based on such common values as freedom, democracy, lawfulness, respect for human rights, and the development of a market economy.

"Russian-ROK relations have improved to the extent that the two countries released a joint declaration: In June 1994, President Boris Yeltsin and ROK President Kim Yong-sam signed a joint declaration on fostering reciprocal and constructive relations of partnership. I can say there is no obstacle to the bilateral relations. I should say Minister Kong No-myong has significantly contributed to improving the bilateral relations. Foreign Minister Kong No-myong is also well known as first ROK ambassador to Russia."

Commenting on the political cooperation, a spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry said the following:

[Unidentified spokesman] "The two countries have very similar positions on political issues: The two countries seek to consolidate peace and security in Northeast Asia and the world in general.

"Russia positively helped the ROK become a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council. Our working contacts with ROK delegates at the UN Security Council bring about realistic decisions that will further consolidate the United Nations and further the interests of the world body.

"The ROK positively supports Russia's joining in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. The ROK acknowledges that economic integration will not be facilitated smoothly without Russian participation. It also acknowledges that multilateral economic cooperation in its region will not be possible without Russian participation, either.

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"According to the decision in June 1994, the Russian and ROK Foreign Ministries have regular consultative meetings. The two countries must more actively exchange information at such consultative meetings and probe for ways to implement the bilateral agreements."

The U.S. and ROK Presidents have recently proposed coordinating the problem on the peninsula in four-party talks. When questioned whether a solution to this problem will be possible without Russian participation, bureau chief (Moiseyev) said the following:

[Moiseyev] "We are carefully (?examining) the proposal for holding four-party talks without any preconditions. However, Moscow acknowledges that it is more desirable to solve the problem on the peninsula with the participation of all countries concerned. Therefore, Russia proposed multilateral talks among the DPRK, the ROK, Russia, the United States, Japan, China, the United Nations, and the International Atomic Energy Agency long ago."

(Valentin Moiseyev), director of the ROK Bureau of the Russian Foreign Ministry, said that this issue will be discussed extensively during the visit to Moscow by the ROK foreign minister.

Russia: Primakov, Ukraine's Udovenko Hold Talks in Strasbourg

LD0305192996 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1700 GMT 3 May 96

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Representatives of most European countries met today in the Palais de l'Europe in the French town of Strasbourg, known since the war as the crossroads of Europe. [passage omitted]

[Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs] Yevgeniy Primakov and his Ukrainian counterpart Hennadiy Udovenko also had a discussion in Strasbourg, at Udovenko's request, about bilateral relations and international problems. According to the Ukrainian minister, Kiev wants to ask Moscow for a series of consultations, particularly regarding NATO expansion and European security. Ukraine is ready to receive President Yeltsin at any time, and Kiev does not want to link the remaining disagreements over the Black Sea Fleet with President Yeltsin's visit and the signing of an agreement on friendship and cooperation, Hennadiy Udovenko said during the conversation.

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Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Returns to Moscow After Yaroslavl Trip

LD0305182896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1805 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 3 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin returned to Moscow after a one-day visit to the city of Yaroslavl, 160 miles north-east of Moscow.

In Yaroslavl, Yeltsin laid flowers to a monument to Russian prince Yaroslav the Wise after whom the city was named.

Later, the president visited a memorial cemetery where he spoke to veterans of World War II and the Afghan War.

Yeltsin also spoke to local residents about a peaceful settlement in Chechnya.

At the end of the trip, he visited a nunnery and met parishioners.

Russia: Yeltsin: NATO's Expansion Will Upset Balance in Europe

LD0605120196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1117 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 6 (Itar-Tass) — "I am confident of my win" is the headline under which Business People magazine has published an interview with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. The latest issue of the magazine appeared on sale on Monday. The text of the interview has been made available to Itar-Tass by the Presidential Press Service.

In response to a remark that "there are people in the West, who believe that nothing special would ensue following a change-over of personalities in the Kremlin," Yeltsin stated as follows:

"Yes, there are such people over there as well. I think that they either want Russia to grow weak so as to remove it as a promising competitor from the world markets or they are simply short-sighted people, to put it mildly.

"Attempts to build socialism in Russia anew is certain to reverberate throughout the world. But noteworthy is also something else, namely, that the West presses for NATO enlargement precisely on the plea of counteracting a possible reversion to the past in Russia.

"On this issue, we shall firmly uphold our stand: the admission of new members to the North Atlantic bloc and NATO's eastward expansion to approach the borders of Russia would upset the military-and-political balance in Europe. When balance is upset, there is always a desire to restore it. I would advise those, who encourage NATO membership bids, and those, who actively strive to get there, to take a somewhat deeper look into the future."

Russia: Yeltsin Favors Stronger Presidential Power

LD0605114596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1013 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 6 (Interfax) — Stronger presidential power is natural as a guarantee against shocks during the current period, Russian President Boris Yeltsin told the Delovyye Lyudi (Business People) magazine.

"Declarations on a certain restoration of Soviet power through abolition of the presidency or major limits on presidential powers" are dangerous, he said.

"Our experience has proved that successful reforms need a strong center," said the president. "I think any change in the balance of power will have the most negative consequences."

The main delusion of a certain part of Russian democrats is their assurance that any political forces will have to continue economic transformations, noted Yeltsin. "I would not say the reforms are so profound they cannot be reversed. I think nothing will prevent the forces which are dreaming of the past from introducing their own rules if they happen to gain power."

"What is more, I am sure they are getting ready for unlimited actions, just as it was after 1917," he said.

Yeltsin warned that the Russian opposition forces cannot be compared to the leftist political parties of Eastern Europe and the Baltic republics. "We have a party of revenge in Russia. Its ideology is based on Marxist-Leninist ideas," said Yeltsin.

He lamented that "the democrats are stuck in personal ambitions and discussion of mutual relations," which has much weakened their position.

"Being the president and a citizen, I cannot betray the interests of those Russians who believe in changes. I am ready to stand for their interests against any rival," he noted.

"We will do everything to ease the burden of reforms," promised Yeltsin. However, one should not identify the president with one's dissatisfaction with the current situation. "The country is progressing, although with mistakes and breaks," he said.

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"Any promises of a presidential candidate sound natural" during the presidential race. "But the current president should not promise what cannot be done," said Yeltsin.

"Reformer Yeltsin had a serious schooling when he was a communist, which seems to help him decisively stand for the reforms against numerous opponents," he added.

Russia: Yeltsin Presents Award to Federation Council Chairman

LD0405210496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1132 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 4 May (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has awarded Federation Council chairman Yegor Stroyev the third-class order "For Services to the Fatherland" in recognition of his great personal contribution to the implementation of economic reform and the development of Russian statehood.

Gennadiy Veretennikov, the Russian president's plenipotentiary representative in the Moscow region, has been awarded the Order of Friendship for his services to the state and his many years of conscientious work.

Russia: Yeltsin Warns of Threat of Reversing Reforms

LD0305162096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1607 GMT 3 May 96

[By Nelly Grigoryan, Andrey Surzhanskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YAROSLAVL, May 3 (Itar-Tass) — Russia has been carrying out the reforms for four years and the reforms are not completed yet. What is more, there is a real threat of turning back. Everything depends on the outcome of the June 16 elections, Boris Yeltsin told a meeting of the public in the Russian city of Yaroslavl on Friday. Yeltsin is on a visit to the ancient Russian city on the Volga.

Speaking about the delays in wage payments, the president said he did not relieve the government of the responsibility. However, it is often the fault of local authorities and managers of enterprises, while trade unions seem to forget that they must control directors of both state and private enterprises, Yeltsin noted.

A total of 1261 legal proceedings have been instituted against directors for abusing the position, the president said.

Yeltsin noted that one of the positive results of the current reforms in Russia is "the saturation" of the market in recent years. It has happened because those able to do it were allowed to display the initiative and it has worked, the president said.

He also noted that the pace of the price increase had been slowed substantially. The government will be able to limit the price increase to one percent a month and that will have a positive effect on the incomes of all Russians.

The key task now is to ensure growing production and boost the industry and agriculture. The third stage of the reforms has begun. The basis of the stage is both internal and external investments, the president noted.

"I am convinced we can and must substantially increase the good return from the reforms, the efficiency of our policy on the new, market, basis," he said, adding that, first of all, it concerns the social sphere and the sphere of culture, science and education.

Beginning 1997, the share of budget spendings for culture will increase. The government plans to ensure a forestalling rise in incomes of workers in the field of art, education and science. "We will encourage in every way the revival of the best traditions of Russian patronship of the arts, charity and private donations to culture," the president said.

"It should be admitted that we failed to avoid errors in the past few years. But if speaking frankly, may it be otherwise? What we did was done for the first time, didn't it? The errors are also our experience, our capital," he said.

"A lot of reproaches may be cast upon the president. But I hope nobody will deny that in all these years I was a guarantor of the freedom of speech and I remain the same."

"Those who are not tired of exposing the "anti-popular regime", are well using all the rights and freedoms. Will they retain the freedoms when coming to power?" the president asked.

"Freedom is the most valuable common property of the mankind. Let's consistently get used to its possibilities and, what is the main thing, learn to link freedom with responsibility. And, on this basis, there will be such welfare of Russia the country has never known," the president said in conclusion.

Russia: Yeltsin Declines To Reveal Exact Date of Trip to Chechnya

LD0305161696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1542 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YAROSLAVL, May 3 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin declined to

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name an exact date of his future trip to Chechnya. "When I will go to Chechnya is a secret," he answered a question during his visit to the Yaroslavl Military Financial College Friday.

"Military operations are not waged in Chechnya now, but there still are gangs, and we have to bring about order," he told students' parents. "We seek to engage chiefly the Chechen police and interior forces in this process.

"We will pull out army units from Chechnya, but put them of the border so that we could crack down on the militants, if they, save God, start to behave like hooligans again," he said.

Yeltsin said he will announce his settlement formula during his trip to Chechnya.

"Three forces will sit at the negotiation table, including Doku Zavgayev, federal officials from the State Commission for Settlement in Chechnya and representatives of the rebel commanders," he said.

Yeltsin said he would like to talks to bring results before the elections, but "they may result to be delayed, since the issue is far from simple." At the same time, he hoped "the delay will be measured in weeks or months, but not years."

"Though our military in Chechnya come under criticisms, they acted very professionally," Yeltsin said. However, the way to conflict settlement is through peace talks, he underlined.

Yeltsin does not yet have an exact appointment with the widow of deceased Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, Presidential Press Secretary Sergey Medvedev told Interfax Friday. At the same time, he did not exclude the possibility of such a meeting.

Russia: Yeltsin Signs Decree on Justice Department Powers

LD0305135196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1323 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 3 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has signed a decree providing for development of justice bodies in the Russian Federation and aimed "at enhancing the role of the Ministry of Justice, its bodies and offices in the implementation of the legal reform in Russia."

The decree issued on Friday [3 May] entrusted the Ministry of Jutstice with conducting judicial examination by experts of federal draft laws submitted by the executive authorities to the government. The ministry is also to exercise control whether departmental laws correspond to the Constitution, presidential decrees and government resolutions.

The decree stipulates broader rights for the ministry for performing such tasks as controlling whether activities of public organisations correspond to their prescribed objectives and whether the Constitution, federal laws, presidential decrees and government resolutions are observed.

The president also instructed the ministry to submit to the government a conception for reforming the justice bodies.

Russia: Reporter Describes Conversation With Yeltsin on May Day

MM0605083796 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 5 May 96 p 1

[Report by Boris Slavin: "Not Only Rain Dampens Trade Unions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] By tradition May Day is a holiday of international solidarity of working people in the struggle for their rights. Moreover, it is one of the most widely observed holidays, where people of different political convictions and views unite to say "no" to unemployment, lower wages, and harsh working conditions.

You would have thought that these truths were known to all, but clearly, they are not known to the leadership of Moscow's Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia organization, which decided to hold its May Day demonstration and rally in the capital without the participation of any political parties and movements, but in the context of the overt election campaign by the Russian president and the mayor of Moscow. To that end the festive columns of demonstrators and the capital's streets were arranged correspondingly, and B. Yeltsin and Yu. Luzhkov were invited to the rally.

Around 3,000 people attended the trade union demonstration and rally, and half of them left as soon as it started raining. They were not even attracted by the presence at the rally of the president, who for some reason was using opposition phrases, saying that the country has long needed peace and that working people, if they work on the basis of social justice, should receive their pay on time — an area where the trade unions should be helping the president. The other speeches were equally strange. Thus, one worker tried to persuade the authorities that she did not want any privileges for herself, just a normal wage for a decent life. The same tone was adopted by a Moscow teacher, who heaped praise upon the mayor of Moscow instead issuing a cry for help for the impoverished teachers.

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But people's May Day sentiments were in evidence here as well. They could also be noticed in the demonstrators' slogans — give pay to those in jobs and jobs to those without them. There was no shortage of music and the people's favorite songs — generally from the Soviet era.

As soon as the official rally ended and the rain stopped, Boris Yeltsin met the people, as it were. This was when your PRAVDA correspondent met with him. The conversation went as follows:

[Slavin] Boris Nikolayevich, what does May Day mean for you today?

[Yeltsin] A lot of joy.

[Slavin] What would you like to say to Muscovites today?

[Yeltsin] Many homes and civilian facilities are currently under construction in Moscow. That is largely down to the mayor of Moscow — whom I think Muscovites will be voting for in June.

[Slavin] Tell me, what percentage of the the electorate's votes do you plan to win in the first round of the coming election?

[Yeltsin] I am not the State Planning Committee, able to plan things like that....

[Slavin] Boris Nikolayevich, might you give PRAVDA as an opposition newspaper a special preelection interview?

[Yeltsin] Maybe. [Yeltsin ends]

A more definite answer to the same question was given by Yu. Luzhkov, who agreed to meet with a PRAVDA journalist in the very near future.

After this conversation I found it difficult to break out of the ring of numerous security men surrounding the president. While the "tough guys" had thrown a double ring around him down on Tverskaya Street, up on the roofs of buildings marksmen were closely monitoring him and the crowd. Clearly, it is not just kings but democratic leaders who like the "guards to get up early" or the Zhigulis to turn into armored security vehicles once they have come to power. After the meeting a motorcade took Boris Yeltsin to the Sparrow Hills, where the president bought two Russian dolls for 100,000 rubles, thereby demonstrating his love of Russians.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Confers With Deputy Premiers at Vnukovo-2 Airport

LD0605054696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0416 GMT 6 May 96

[By Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW May 6 (Itar-Tass) — Upon returning here from Helsinki at the close of his two-day working visit to Finland, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin conferred with Vice-Premiers at Vnukovo-2 airport on Sunday night. The closed-door meeting, which lasted more than one hour, dealt mainly with economic porblems, informed sources have told Itar-Tass.

Before going to Finland, Chernomyrdin had paid an official visit to Stockholm and attended a conference of the Premiers of the Council of Baltic Sea States.

Russia: Khasbulatov Claims Chechen War Financed With IMF Money

BR0305145096 Madrid ABC in Spanish 3 May 96 p 36

[Report by Juan Cierco: "The War in Chechnya Is Financed With Money From the International Monetary Fund"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Together with Aleksandr Rutskoy, he was the main instigator of the parliamentary revolt of October 1993 against Boris Yeltsin. First condemned and then pardoned, he disappeared from public life for a while until his former enemy, the president of Russia, gave him the task a few months ago of mediating in the bloody war in Chechnya. It was a futile effort, since Ruslan Khasbulatov discovered that Moscow was not interested in peace.

Today, from his chair of economics at the University of Moscow, Khasbulatov feels no restriction in reporting the truths making the rounds of Russia's political and military gossip shops, but which very few people with full knowledge of the facts dared to explain. The former president of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation spares no one: "Boris Yeltsin is controlled by his hawks." "For many people war is a welcome opportunity to launder their money in Chechnya." "The Kremlin has never wanted to negotiate for peace." The $10 billion which the IMF recently gave Russia was used to directly support the military machinery."

[Cierco] What impact will Dudayev's death have on the war?

[Khasbulatov] It will have practically no impact. The people fighting in Chechnya are not fighting because

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Dudaev told them to. They are fighting for their dignity, their independence, and against a common enemy — the Russians. They will carry on with or without Dudayev.

[Cierco] Is there a power vacuum in Chechnya now?

[Khasbulatov] No, and it hurts the Russians a lot to hear that. It is practically impossible to put an end, militarily, to the Chechen resistance. The guerrilla fighters do not depend on just one leader, although General Aslan Masjadov [name as published] has certainly emerged strongly from among them, especially in military matters. It is not all that important whether Dudayev is there or not. Without him, the Chechens will carry on as they have done so far.

Moscow Wants War

[Cierco] Why is the war lasting so long?

[Khasbulatov] Because that is what Moscow wants — nothing more nothing less. There are too many personal interests tied up in this war. On the one hand there are the elections. The Kremlin is reserving the possibility of canceling the elections using the pretext provided by Chechnya or terrorist attacks which the Chechens are supposedly going to commit in Russia. There are also economic interests involved. Astronomical sums are being moved. Money is changing hands with no controls. Many people are filling their pockets. Others are taking advantage of the situation to launder money with Army contracts, while the Chechen people and Russian soldiers die from genocide.

[Cierco] Does Yeltsin have the authority to stop the war?

[Khasbulatov] If he committed himself fully to stopping it then he might succeed. However, Yeltsin is not an indispensable president. He is controlled by his hawks and called into question by his generals. When he announced a cease-fire, the military undertook to violate it a few hours later. The worst thing is that no heads are rolling for insubordination. Yeltsin is a hostage, as well as an accomplice, of the war.

[Cierco] So there is no possibility of a dialogue in Chechnya?

[Khasbulatov] It is that simple. The generals' political influence has never been so brazen in Russia. It is comparable to what happened in the days of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, the Communist regimes, and so on. If the war ends, the military and the hawks in the Kremlin — sometimes they overlap — will find their power limited and neither are prepared to let that happen.

[Cierco] But the war is costing a lot and Russia is not exactly rich.

[Khasbulatov] Do not worry about that. The IMF is just what the doctor ordered for the hawks and military men. Early in the year, when I was asked to negotiate with the Chechens, I attended a meeting where it was literally said that it was imperative, for purely economic reasons, to end the war and withdraw the troops from Chechnya. Then along came IMF President Michel Camdessus, with $10 billion for Russia. I am an economist: I am fully aware of the shape the government's finances are in and I can ensure you that every last bit of that money was used in the war in Chechnya. Without the IMF money, the conflict would have ended or would be on its way to ending immediately for reasons that go beyond the personal whims and interests of a few people.

[Cierco] What impact will the war have on the presidential elections on 16 June?

[Khasbulatov] It could have an influence, especially with regard to the possible cancellation of the elections. Yeltsin, who with or without the presidential elections is not prepared to give up power, may — for example — decree a state of emergency. Anyone who holds power today in Russia lives only on a day-to-day basis and adheres to the philosophy of dictatorships: "After me, the deluge," Yeltsin tells himself every morning.

Russia: St. Petersburg Mayor To Monitor Observance of Local Election Law

LD0305150496 St. Petersburg Fifth Channel Television Network in Russian 1155 GMT 3 May 96

[From the "Inform-TV" program presented by Irina Terkina]

[FBIS Translated Text] [St. Petersburg Mayor] Anatoliy Sobchak intends to monitor the observance of the local law on elections rigorously and, amongst other things, to bring to book all candidates whose campaign posters are found in inappropriate places. Nadezhda Khokhlova reports:

[Begin Khokhlova recording] The campaigning in the run up to the mayoral elections should put money in the city coffers, city Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak told the press, promising that all illegal advertisements by candidates would be torn down at once and the culprit fined. Of course, it will not be the mayor himself who deals with this but staff from the relevant bodies. Anatoliy Sobchak stressed that measures such as this would also be extended to his own campaign group if they breach the rules.

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Observations carried out today by "Inform-TV" indicate that the mayor's group is following the law. Anatoliy Aleksandrovich's image may be seen on pillars and stands specially designed for canvassing. The same cannot be said of portraits of one of his rivals: Some posters were stuck up on walls so high that representatives of the relevant bodies needed a step-ladder to tear them down. Most likely, though, the tatters of election posters will be around a long time to remind St. Petersburg citizens of 19 May 1996. [end recording]

Russia: Antiterrorist Units Fight Moscow Bureaucracy

LD0305140496

[FBIS Summary] Moscow NTV in Russian at 1800 GMT on 2 May broadcasts a 4-minute special video report from the Defense Ministry studios by "Segodnya" correspondent Yevgeniy Kirichenko. The report is filed from the 8th Detachment of Special Purpose Internal Troops, which should be based in Moscow but which for the second consecutive year has been serving in Chechnya.

The report begins with correspondent saying: "The detachment, code-named Rus, was intended as an alternative to the Vityaz detachment — of October 1993 fame — to combat international terrorism. For the last 17 months it has been fighting in the most dangerous sectors in Chechnya. Top-class professionals, who are readily invited for an exchange of experience at antiterrorist centers in Israel and Austria, are frequently obliged to take part in general military operations alongside paratroopers and marines — sustaining unjustified losses in the process. Fanatically devoted to their duty and welded together by the military fraternity which is particularly characteristic of special purpose troops, they return from this war and then start another war — a war with bureaucracy."

The correspondent then interviews servicemen who were wounded in Chechnya but who have received no welfare assistance and who have been refused state benefits to fund operations or protheses; one officer mentions an example when fellow officers had make a collection in order to fund an operation to implant an artificial eye.

In conclusion, the correspondent notes: "The state is allocating tens of billions of rubles to restoring Chechnya's national economy. Officers and men wounded and mutilated fox/mc 03/140] Moscow NTV in Russian at 1800 GMT on 2 May broadcasts a 4-minute special video report from the Defense Ministry studios by "Segodnya" correspondent Yevgeniy Kirichenko. The report is filed from the 8th Detachment of Special Purpose Internal Troops, which should be based in Moscow but which for the second consecutive year has been serving in Chechnya.

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In conclusion, the correspondent notes: "The state is allocating tens of billions of rubles to restoring Chechnya's national economy. Officers and men wounded and mutilated in that war are getting back to health on the scanty funds provided by the ministry and on money collected by their fellow servicemen."

Military Issues

Russia: Grachev: Restructuring To Be Based on Chechen Experience

LD0505120796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0941 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, May 5 (Interfax) — Units in the North Caucasus Military District will be restructured on the basis of the experience of military actions conducted in Chechnya, Defense Minister Pavel Grachev told Interfax.

"The need has emerged to form infantry units and airborne assault units capable of fighting in the mountains, and airborne assault units to be dropped from helicopters in unfamiliar localities," he said.

"The special rapid deployment units will also undergo some changes," Grachev said. "This concerns primarily field engineer and sapper units designed to reconnoiter mountainous areas and defuse mines there."

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The federal troops have acquired "considerable experience" during their military operations in Chechnya, Grachev said. "Interaction between ground troops, the air force, missile forces and artillery units was established rather quickly," he said.

"The main problem" in waging military actions in Chechnya was the lack of experience in such operations, Grachev said. "Besieging towns and preparing to take them by storm in one's own country was very hard from the psychological point of view," he said.

Russia: Grachev Visits Yerevan, Notes Military Ties With Armenia

MM0605080296 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 5 May 96 p 1

[Report by Vitaliy Denisov and Petr Karapetyan: "Coalition Group of Forces in Transcaucasus Created. Visit by Russian Federation Defense Minister Army General Pavel Grachev to Yerevan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Armenians claim that the sight of Mount Ararat in all its beauty brings great good fortune. Admittedly, most of the time you cannot make out this 5,000-meter giant owing to the clouds shrouding its peak. But a Russian military delegation was in luck. The day that Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev began his working visit to Armenia Ararat looked as if it were emerging from the canvas of the great Martiros Saryan [early 20th-century Armenian artist]: There was not a cloud in the sky and there you saw the refuge of the Biblical Noah's Ark in all its beauty....

At Zvartnots Airport Army General Pavel Grachev was greeted by Armenian Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan with full military honors and the motorcade then headed off for Yerevan.

The Russian minister's visit began in a warm and friendly manner. Even chance passersby on seeing the motorcade immediately bought carnations from street traders and strewed the Russian military's route to the Armenian capital with them.

It should be noted that Army Gen. Pavel Grachev's visit to Armenia was very intensive. On the first day he met with the republic's President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan, and other officials. The heads of the two countries' military departments met with journalists after a joint session attended by Russian and Armenian Defense Ministry leadership personnel. During the briefing Pavel Grachev noted, in particular, that Armenia was the first CIS country with which Russia signed a treaty on the siting of a military base. Our relations, he pointed out, "lead the way among the CIS countries; we have concluded a fair number of agreements and treaties with other states also, but they are not all, regrettably, being implemented as effectively and promptly as our agreements and treaties with Armenia."

Pavel Grachev and Vazgen Sarkisyan signed 12 documents (18 to date), including a plan for bilateral military cooperation in 1996. It is intended to sign similar plans every year. Our cooperation, Pavel Grachev noted, is multifaceted as befits the armed forces of two fraternal peoples.

The agreements reached during the visit to Yerevan have boosted to an even higher level the two countries' cooperation in the military and military-technical spheres, in the organization of air defense and the training of military cadres, as well as in a number of other areas.

Based on the results of his work the Russian defense minister thanked all the experts and officials involved in the preparations for the Russian and Armenian defense ministers' working meeting. Pavel Grachev noted that "such meetings between Russian and other CIS Defense Ministry leaders and the holding of joint meetings of collegiums have become a priority in the Russian Defense Ministry's work of developing bilateral military cooperation. We have already had similar meetings with Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Georgia. They resulted in the signing of a large package of documents, which attest to the long-term nature of the cooperation between the CIS states' military departments and their desire for integration and to galvanize relations."

In response to journalists' questions Army Gen. Pavel Grachev said that this year it is planned to conduct a number of joint command-staff and troop exercises with the Armenian Armed Forces. Command-staff exercises and "armed forces' drills involving troops" will be held in the summer by agreement between the sides. Exercises involving coalition air defense forces both on Russian and Armenian territory will be planned and carried out. Joint exercises involving subunits of the Group of Russian Forces in the Transcaucasus [GRFT] and the Armenian Army are planned in July. The minutes of the conference of Russian and Armenian Defense Ministry leadership personnel on approaches to the creation of a coalition group of forces in the Transcaucasus and to planning the use of the Russian Armed Forces, in particular the GRFT, and the Armenian Armed Forces within the coalition grouping on questions of "our common interest" was signed. Three major joint events involving the Armenian and Russian defense departments are planned in all.

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Russia: Cross-Border Arms Smuggling Seen Increasing

LD0605091896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0858 GMT 6 May 96

[By Nikolay Styazhkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STAVROPOL, May 6 (Itar-Tass) — Attempts at contraband of arms across the stretch of the Russian border on the Caucasian highlands between the Caspian and the Black Seas become more frequent. Lieutenant-General Vladimir Ruzlyayev, the Commander of the Caucasian frontier district, said this at a news conference.

He noted that whereas over 11,000 units of ammunition were confiscated throughout last year, over 4,000 units of ammunition were confiscated in the four months of the current year. Border violations, too, become more frequent in the area. As many as 821 border crossers have already been detained this year whereas the figure for last year was 1,400.

Frontier guards are confiscating ever more contraband, the commander said. Contraband worth 5.9 billion roubles was confiscated in 1995. Contraband worth 1.1 billion roubles has already been confiscated from the beginning of this year.

Russia: Arms Smuggling From Azerbaijan 'Tending To Increase'

MM0605102296 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 6 May 96 p 1

["Own Information" report: "'Caravan of Death' Halted on Russian-Azerbaijani Border"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Caucasus Special Border District guards have prevented another attempted arms shipment across the Russian border from Azerbaijani territory. Investigative organs do not rule out the idea that the shipment was destined for gunmen in Chechnya.

During a news conference Lieutenant General Vladimir Ruzlyayev, commander of the Caucasus Special Border District, noted that attempts to violate Russia's state border with Azerbaijan are tending to increase. He said that border guards have frequently observed unidentified aircraft flying from Azerbaijan in the direction of Chechnya. There are extremely frequent attempts to ship weapons from Azerbaijani territory. Thus, shortly before the May Day holiday, district border guards stopped two KamAZ trucks laden with aerial bombs, which can easily be used on the ground after minor modifications.

Regional Affairs

Russia: Yeltsin: Talks With Chechen Field Commanders 'Necessary'

LD0305120996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1109 GMT 3 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Andrey Surzhanskiy and Nelli Grigoryan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yaroslavl, 3 May (ITAR-TASS) — "In connection with the fact that Dudayev no longer exists, it is necessary to do business with the field commanders." Russian President Boris Yeltsin said this today in reply to an ITAR-TASS correspondent's question during a conversation with Yaroslavl residents near the Military Financial College.

"When I go to Chechnya, I will announce that three sides will sit down at the negotiating table," the head of the Russian state said, "namely, Zavgayev's government, the state commission headed by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the third side — the field commanders, who, of course, want to take part in the negotiating process."

"These three parties should carry out the talks," Boris Yeltsin went on to say. "It is difficult to say how long the talks will take. However, I don't think they will be lengthy," the president stressed. "I would like them to take place before the presidential elections," he noted adding that it may not come true. At the same time Boris Yeltsin expressed hope that "at least the dialogue will not drag on for months or even years. I am confident of this because the federal forces have given the Dudayev bandits a fairly good hiding. Some people criticize our military but this is unfair," the president noted.

Russia: Premier Not To Take Part in Talks With Chechen Field Commanders

MK0505103796 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 5 May 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Russian Premier Will Not Participate in Talks With Field Commanders"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Viktor Chernomyrdin does not plan to participate in talks with Chechen field commanders, a source in the prime minister's immediate entourage has announced. Acting on Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin's instruction, the head of government will coordinate peace talks with field commanders as chairman of the state commission on settling the crisis in the republic.

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Russia: Yandarbiyev Against Chechen Authorities in Negotiation Process

LD0505113896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1047 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 5 May (Itar-Tass) — The new leader of the Chechen separatists said today he was categorically against allowing the official Chechnya authorities to take part in the negotiation process as an independent entity.

"There are not three, but two sides in the armed conflict — Russia and Chechnya — and they are the ones who should settle the matter," he said in an interview with ITAR-TASS correspondent Sharip Asuyev, who met the "president of Ichkeria" in a remote southern village. Describing Doku Zavgayev's government as "puppets," Yandarbiyev said "Zavgayev's supporters can take part in talks only as part of the Russian Federation delegation."

Ichkeria would hold talks only with a representative of Russia's supreme leadership who has officially denied any complicity in the assassination of Dzhokhar Dudayev, he added. "If the opposing side has a real desire to settle the dispute peacefully, then we are ready to talk," he said. "If that desire is not there, then the Chechen resistance has someone to fight and the means to fight."

Nikolay Koshman, chairman of the Chechen Republic government, described Yandarbiyev's words as a provocation. In an interview with ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Artyushin, he said the separatists were trying to destabilize the situation by advancing demands that they know are unacceptable to the official Chechen authorities. "If they are to blame for the talks not going ahead, then it will be clear who really wants peace and who wants war," Koshman said. He stressed that talks should be held under the auspices of the presidential program for a Chechnya peace settlement.

Boris Yeltsin's plan envisages talks between representatives of the State Commission chaired by Viktor Chernomyrdin, Doku Zavgayev's government, and field commanders.

Vladimir Zorin, who chairs the Duma nationalities committee, told ITAR-TASS today that "changes in the Chechen separatist leadership will not wreck the head of state's strategic plan."

Russia: Ignatyev Denies 16 May Date for Yeltsin's Trip to Chechnya

MM0505183296 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 6 May 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Gamov: "Yeltsin Is Going to Chechnya"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "I will go to Chechnya, but when is a secret. Do you want me to tell you, so that they can make preparations, or what? I'll make my own preparations and then I'll go."

That was how President Yeltsin reacted the other day to insistent requests by people in Yaroslavl to name the exact date of his visit to the "hot spot." Although soon it was heard anyway, on a television newscast: 16 May. Igor Ignatyev, head of the president's press service, whom we asked for clarification, refuted this report and confirmed something different: that the trip, as was announced earlier, will take place in the first half of May.

However, the main point is not precisely when Boris Yeltsin will set off for Chechnya, but why? In his meeting with the people of Yaroslavl the president made it clear that he sees his main task as just one thing: From the very beginning of the tripartite talks (the Zavgayev government — the federal authorities — the field commanders), to give them a peacemaking impetus. Yeltsin wants no stalling here.

There is also another reason for the head of state's trip to Chechnya. "Repeated checks carried out by the presidential services and military control institutions have confirmed: Combat operations have ceased in Chechnya," Boris Yeltsin stated. Apparently he wants to confirm this for himself.

Of course, there is also a purely electioneering motivation here too: Yeltsin will be the first Russian presidential candidate to risk going to the war-torn republic. If a peace settlement process really does begin in Chechnya after his departure, he will gain additional points.

Russia: Yandarbiyev: No Guarantee of Yeltsin's Security

LD0305160896 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 3 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] There have been no particular changes in the military situation in Chechnya, but the political situation has been boosted by Boris Yeltsin's statements in Yaroslavl today on the subject of negotiations.

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Meanwhile, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, Dzhokhar Dudayev's successor, has said that he will not be able to guarantee Yeltsin's safety during the latter's stay in the Chechen capital.

According to RIA, a statement released in Groznyy today states that the leadership of Ichkeria [Chechnya] will never sit down at the negotiating table with anybody, if Doku Zavgayev is present as a third party. Yandarbiyev's statement stresses that President Yeltsin does not want to understand that there are only two sides in the Chechen crisis — the Russian and the Chechen. We will be compelled to resort to other methods of resolving the problem. End of quote.

Russia: Yeltsin Cited on Chechnya Peace Talks During Yaroslavl Visit

MM0605094396 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 5 May 96 Weekend Edition p 3

[Report by correspondent Yuriy Vakhrin: "Time in Barracks Over: Boris Yeltsin Continues His Trip Through Russia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yaroslavl — The Russian president visited Yaroslavl last Friday [3 May]. Boris Yeltsin again proved that he himself is capable of doing more for his own election campaign than the whole of his team.

Addressing his fellow-citizens, Boris Yeltsin aptly compared society today to a demobilized soldier. Until only yesterday it was military regulations, the barracks, and superior officers, whose orders had to be carried out without fail, which were the most important things; now, on entering civilian life, he has to decide everything himself, to make his own choices in life, and to accept responsibility for them.

For the current president any trip around the country is above all a professional one. Many requests by Yaroslavl's inhabitants were addressed not to a contender for the post of head of state but to the person who is actually tackling the problems affecting people's lives today.

News had already spread through Russia that during his swing Yeltsin would be signing edicts granting concessions to those regions he was visiting. Two draft edicts prepared by Yaroslavl officials were postponed on this occasion: The documents first need to be thoroughly worked through with the government. One edict is concerned with giving support to the country's diesel engine building, granting the sector certain advantages in the domestic market and promoting its products in foreign markets, particularly in CIS countries. So the president is not signing documents or dishing out promises in order to court the populist vote. This is most likely because he is confident of winning the coming election. He will have actually to carry out any promises given today.

Speaking about overcoming the Chechen crisis, Boris Yeltsin noted that his instructions halting combat operations are being fulfilled. Russia's Armed Forces will be deployed along Chechnya's borders, according to the president.

"Given that Dudayev is no more, it is necessary to deal with the field commanders," Boris Yeltsin stressed. "We have decided as follows: When I go to Chechnya, I will declare that three delegations will sit down at the negotiating table: the first is the Zavgayev government; the second is the federal organ, the Chernomyrdin-headed state commission which I set up by edict; and the third is the field commanders who want, of course, to take part in the peace process."

The president concluded his trip by visiting the Tolgskiy Monastery, which has been resurrected from its ruins by Yaroslavl's inhabitants in just a few years.

"I have again been able to see for myself how you love and take pride in your region," Boris Nikolayevich said on bidding the people of Yaroslavl farewell, "in other words, you love Russia and know how to take pride in it. In other words, you are not indifferent to the future of the country and Yaroslavl Oblast. Therefore your choice on 16 June will be a correct one."

Russia: Federal Command Further Extends Shali Cease-Fire

LD0305192696 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1800 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The command of federal forces has given the militants in Shali another 48 hours to meet the demands of the ultimatum of which the deadline has already been extended twice. The demands remain the same: surrender of arms, release of captured servicemen of federal forces, and restoration of legitimate power in Shali.

In an interview with our radio station the head of the Chechen republic, Doku Zavgayev, stressed that the situation in Shali is gradually coming back to normal.

[Begin Zavgayev recording] Things are improving there. Things are moving towards the surrender of arms. This is the latest news from there. Nikolay Pavlovich Koshman, chairman of the government of the Chechen republic, personally visited the place yesterday. He had meetings there, talked to people. He reported to me today. So things are returning to normal there. We will

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do everything possible so that the situation is resolved peacefully there. [end recording]

Meanwhile, Vagap Tutakov, plenipotentiary representative of the republic of Ichkeria [Chechnya] in Russia, has told our radio station that there were no military operations in Shali today, however, according to him, there are incessant provocations there on the part of federal troops:

[Begin Tutakov recording] Shelling, killings, they throw mines at places where local residents gather who are either protesting or just waiting for new developments. Some houses and streets have come under fire. They would fire once or twice to try to provoke retaliatory fire so that they could start [?a military operation]. Supporters of independence are doing everything now to avoid confrontation there and they left the place in good time. There are no home guard detachments there. People are doing everything not to respond to provocations. [end recording]

Russia: OSCE Official Claims No Militants, Weapons in Shali

LD0305132396 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1200 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE] assistance group in Chechnya has different information on the situation in Shali. German Lieutenant Colonel Yurgen Khaidukov, a member of the group, who has spent two day in Shali, assures that there are neither militants nor weapons there. He informed us that the situation in the district center is very difficult. Incidentally, cruelty and an inhumane attitude at the Russian roadblocks surrounding the town only make it more difficult to formulate a decision that would prevent military actions in the district.

[Begin Khaidukov recording] No evacuation has been organized. Women, children, and old folk will now leave this town of their own accord. It is very difficult to pass through the Russian roadblocks. For the time being, the troops at the roadblocks are firing into the air. There are always Russian columns marching all over the place. There is a road, they take this road and set off from Shali toward the village of Argun. [end recording]

Russia: Former Groznyy Mayor Arrested on Fraud Charges

MM0605103396 Moscow TRUD in Russian 6 May 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Aleksandr Danilkin: "Who Has Got His Snout in the 'Chechen Trough'? Former Groznyy Mayor Bislan Gantamirov Arrested"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gantamirov flew to Moscow on an aircraft that came from Istanbul. The unsuspecting Gantamirov was taken in custody and driven to a detention center. It turned out that an official warrant for his arrest had already been issued by then. There is no information now as to why he had flown to Istanbul.

The name of Bislan Gantamirov surfaced at a time when law enforcement agencies have actively begun investigating a criminal case instituted in respect of the theft of federal budget funds destined for the restoration of Chechnya's ravaged economy. The General Prosecutor's Office announced that the former mayor of the Chechen capital was unexpectedly implicated during the investigation of this difficult case.

After Gantamirov's sensational arrest several stories at once appeared as to why this happened at precisely this time. One of the most widespread is that he has moved into opposition to the Chechen Government led by Doku Zavgayev and has paid for this. But one should not forget that quite recently representatives of law enforcement agencies leaked some information to the press that there would shortly be a whole series of criminal proceedings featuring well-known people.

Police Major General Aslambek Aslakhanov, president of the Association of Russian Federation Law Enforcement Agencies and expert on the Chechen problem, commented on this as follows: It is not only local officials but also their colleagues in Moscow itself who are involved in stealing the vast funds being allocated for the restoration of Chechnya. According to Aslakhanov, about 15 percent of the money has reached the people in the republic who really need it, while the rest has disappeared somewhere en route from Moscow to Groznyy. Aslakhanov himself has repeatedly been approached by specialists with their own projects, which considerably cut spending on the restoration of the economy and housing construction. But despite his attempts to introduce these projects the result has been zero. Some people stand to gain from being overpaid for work that is being carried out — or not carried out — in Chechnya. Billions in federal money has gone astray.

As Aslambek Akhmedovich said, he is extremely surprised that Gantamirov was allowed access to this huge trough. Aslakhanov did not dare say that the entire

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present Chechen Government is corrupt, but it is a fact that there are so many officials there. According to his information, there are 12 vice premiers alone. Aslakhanov believes that the president and Gantamirov are just the tip of the iceberg, since the Federal Security Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs have extensive information on many corrupt officials. All this material is biding its time for the moment.

Criminal proceedings in respect of the theft of federal funds are being investigated in Chechnya itself and began some time ago. According to available information, dozens of people are involved in these proceedings. Natalya Vishnyakova, a spokesman for the General Prosecutor's Office press service, said that Bislan Gantamirov has already been officially charged with fraud. The sum involved runs into billions of rubles.

Russia: Zaygayev Spokesman Denies Close Links With Former Mayor

LD0405153196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1411 GMT 4 May 96

[By Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] GROZNYY, May 4 (Itar-Tass) — Ruslan Martagov, the press secretary of Moscow-backed Chechen leader Doku Zavgayev, described as "a serious blow to the authority of the Chechen government" the detention of Beslan Gantamirov.

Gantamirov, who is the former mayor of Grozny, was taken in custody by federal law authorities on Friday on charges of embezzlement of federal billion rouble funds allocated for economic restoration of Chechnya. [sentence as received]

Speaking to reporters, Martagov declined to comment on this, saying that he is "expecting results of investigation of the criminal case."

A release from the public relations centre of the Russian Prosecutor's Office, faxed to Itar-Tass today, says that in progress of investigation it had been established that Gantamirov is "one of the organisers of these acts (thefts)."

Zavgayev's spokesman stressed that Grozny's former mayor "never was a close comrade-in-arms and supporter of Doku Zavgayev."

"Rather he was a figure to reckon with," Martagov said. [passage omitted]

Russia: Basayev Said Not Appointed Commander of Fighters' Forces

LD0505203596 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1940 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aslan Maskhadov, chief of the general staff of Chechen units, and Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, the man who succeeded Dzhokhar Dudayev as president of Ichkeria, had a meeting today in a mountain village in Chechnya, a Chechen source has said. The source noted that no one ever appointed field commander Shamil Basayev as commander in chief of the fighters' forces, let alone head of the delegation at talks with the representatives of the federal government. Basayev is still commanding the so-called central front.

Russia: Chechens Refuse To Believe Dudayev Is Dead

MM0605123896 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA Weekend Edition in Russian 5 May 96 p 5

[Article by Vladimir Yanchenkov: "Phantoms Returning?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The news of Dzhokhar Dudayev's death continues to disturb the public. Even in Chechnya itself it would be hard to meet someone who has come to believe unequivocally and unambiguously in an act of retribution. The opinion reigns everywhere — both in Groznyy's busy marketplace and in offices in government establishments — that the real Dudayev is alive and well in some Arab country and that his killing was a cunning pretense in a dirty political game.

The mass media recently carried a report that one of the Chechen dictator's retainers who happened to witness Dudayev's death managed to take several photographs at the scene of the event, which he sold to a British news service for 150,000 pounds sterling. But not even this apparently documentary evidence shook the skeptics:

"So what? Who will vouchsafe that it was not a Dudayev look-alike, of whom he is known to have had several, who died?"

But I have before me the issue of ICHKERIYA, Dudayev's official government newspaper, for 25 April. "One more act of terrorism...," reads the statement by the so-called State Defense Committee, parliament, and Cabinet of Ministers of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, "was committed 21 April 1996 against Dzhokhar Dudayev, president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, while he was discussing the terms of the talks proposed by Moscow with an intermediary over the telephone. A rocket and bomb strike was made against D. Dudayev's working position. This time the

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enemy achieved his end: D. Dudayev, the Chechen Republic's first president, died of his injuries."

So, following that official statement by the Ichkeria authorities, there can seemingly be no doubts about Dudayev's death.

But the question remains: Why is it that both ordinary Chechens and people invested with power refuse so stubbornly to believe in what happened? Is it not because more than once before similar versions of the death of the closest associates of the head of the Chechen separatists have proved, in fact, not to tally with reality, to put it mildly, or, as the classic writer said, to have been greatly exaggerated?

Let us recall the sensational report of the death of Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of Dudayev's armed formations, who allegedly died at a rally in the city of Shali when a mine placed beneath the improvised rostrum exploded. The press was already on the point of discussing who would take his place when Maskhadov himself, alive and unharmed, once again appeared on television screens. Still earlier a number of Russian newspapers and radio and television reports had buried Salman Raduyev, the perpetrator of the pogroms in Gudermes and Pervomayskoye. He, too, was seen recently in the Urus-Martanovskiy Rayon. Finally, there was the thunderous news of the killing of Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, the successor to the post of head of the Republic of Ichkeria. Portraits of possible claimants to the vacated "throne" — Maskhadov and Basayev — flashed onto television screens.

Once again — a vexing turn of events. An exultant and self- confident Yandarbiyev gave a news conference, placing the all-knowing "reliable sources" in a foolish position.

Of course, the bloody games of intriguing adventurers must not and cannot go unpunished. Sooner or later retribution will come to those who are to blame for the Chechen tragedy. But, by circulating unverified, false information, do the "competent" organs and the mass media that blindly believe them not place themselves in a ridiculous and silly position? For even when Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev held a news conference, and everyone who was sitting in front of his television screen could see him, bearded and alive and well, Chechnya Security Council Secretary Ruslan Tsakayev was assuring journalists that the circumstances of Yandarbiyev's death were being ascertained.

Do phantoms come to life? Yes, if they are actually phantoms created by the imagination of unscrupulous "competent sources."

Russia: Chechen Military Leaders See War Continuing

MM0505160496 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 6 May 96 pp 1-2

[Report by special correspondent Irina Dementyeva from Urus-Martanovskiy Rayon in Chechnya, incorporating interviews with Usman Imayev, Akhmed Zakayev, and Aslan Maskhadov; dates of interviews not given: "Peace and War in Chechnya Through the Eyes of Three of Dudayev's Comrades in Arms"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In Yaroslavl Boris Yeltsin explained to the people how the settlement in Chechnya will take place. According to him, representatives of Zavgayev, representatives of the commission headed by Premier Chernomyrdin, and the field commanders should sit at the conference table. There is an opportunity right now, without waiting for B. Yeltsin's promised visit to Groznyy, to find out the opinions of three of Ichkeria's [Chechnya's] prestigious military leaders and political figures on the proposed plan.

A "tezet" — a memorial meeting to mark Dzhokhar Dudayev's death — was in progress on the outskirts of Urus-Martan. For the first two days the mourning rites took place in the Arsemikovs' yard. I knew one of the brothers, the physicist Isa Arsemikov, and I wrote about his killing in IZVESTIYA back in 1993, in the heat of the first civil confrontations between Chechens. Later, the fighting for Groznyy took the lives of two more sons of this house, from where the tezet for Dudayev spilled out, on the third day, into a huge meadow outside the rayon center.

It must be said that Urus-Martan was only recently regarded as being in opposition to Dudayev. In the summer of 1994 the president of Ichkeria even sent troops there. But Russian planes, helicopters, and guns, Russian generals and contract servicemen turned Urus-Martan, if not pro-Dudayev, then at least anti-Russia.

Under a gloomy sky hundreds of cars, buses, and trucks and thousands of people are packed into a dense square formation. There are many banners, and, for the first time, not a single one in Russian. People translate for me: "Receive, Allah, the sacred death of President Dzhokhar." The men whisper a prayer. Women in white headscarves stand in a circle and sing. The tune sounds cheerful to me, but some of the listening women weep. Adolescents on the roofs of trucks wave Ichkerian flags. A frail old man shuffles by, barely able to put one foot in front of the other, the wind ruffling his white beard. The old man has a brand new Kalashnikov over his shoulder. Outside a tent in the center of the square there are speakers and amplifying equipment. Sometimes in

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response to a speech the crowd punch their fists forward and upward in unison, chanting: "Zhov-khar, Zhov-khar!" or "Nokhchi-cho!" ("Chechnya!") Someone starts a new rallying cry — just three Russian syllables: "Soldiers — out!"

The atmosphere is more menacing than sad.

All at once the crowd thickens around someone. I hear: "Imayev... Imayev...." Suddenly everyone makes way, and Imayev, whom I only know from television, strides rapidly up to the car. He is in a gray robe, with a round, white cap on his head. He is dressed like a mullah. So is the rumor that he has left politics and turned to God true? There are many rumors about him, of every kind, but he has maintained his prestige and the interest in his personality, which in many people's opinion is out of the ordinary. I introduced myself, but I did not have time to get out my ID card — a tall man with a nasty face very determinedly snatched my rucksack from my hands. "If they give me my rucksack back I'll show you my ID." But the rucksack had disappeared into the crowd. Imayev had to take me at my word, and I had to do without my dictaphone and commit our conversation to memory, surrounded by a dense ring of not very friendly people. When Imayev got into the car, the rucksack was returned to me intact.

[boxed biographical note] Usman Imayev. Born 1957. Was a senior staffer at the USSR Embassy in Angola, minister of social security of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, minister of justice and general prosecutor of the Chechen Republic, manager of the national bank of the Chechen Republic. Headed the Chechen Republic-Ichkeria delegation at the trilateral talks in summer 1995 for a long time.

[Imayev] This is a war with Russia, and we didn't start it. You have healthy forces in Russia too (he mentions the letter from 100 representatives of the intelligentsia in IZVESTIYA, and Yelena Bonner, and admits that Yavlinskiy's position is constructive), but the leadership has not made up its mind. You remember the seven options for a settlement, two options, one option, three commissions, two commissions.... (He is cautious in his choice of words.) True, the summer agreements were more promising, because they were very clear. Just a few points. But Russia considered itself deceived. The self-defense detachments remaining in the villages — that's 10,000 new gunmen, they said. There are other obstacles too: 1,700 missing without trace on the Chechen side and 3,800 in Russian filtration centers, detention centers, and prisons. The military have an interest in the continuation of the war, too.

[Dementyeva] All the same, how do you see the immediate future?...

[Imayev] ...of Russia or Chechnya?

[Dementyeva] Chechnya. It is in danger. I'm talking about the people of Chechnya.

[Imayev] That depends on our northern neighbor — Russia. It has to make up its mind. If Russia stabilizes, everything will be fine for Chechnya. Until that happens, the war for freedom and independence will continue in Chechnya. [Imayev ends]

He was not the only person I heard expressing that view — that the situation here in Chechnya depends on what happens in Russia. When Russia becomes a really democratic state, then everything will calm down in Chechnya. "Intra-Chechen dialogue," the decorative "peace zones" — all this is mere words so far. Order and the rule of law must be sought back there, in Moscow.

A meeting with Akhmed Zakayev was arranged for me on the same day.

[boxed biographical note] Akhmed Zakayev. Commander of the Urus-Martan sector of the southwestern salient. In the past, an actor at the Nuradilov Theater. Chairman of the Chechen Republic Union of Theater Workers. Minister of culture in D. Dudayev's government.

We talked in a car which parked in a blind alley after dodging about for a long time. The officers of the resistance army in the rear and side seats of the "bus" tactfully dozed, leaning on the barrels of their automatic weapons. My neighbor had a spotlessly fresh blue shirt visible underneath his camouflage. There was a smell of expensive cologne.

[Dementyeva] What should we call you now? As I understand it, you find the term "separatist" artificial?

[Zakayev] Definitely! Like everything else that Russia imposes on the representatives of our nation. Having invaded our territory, they declared the sole legitimate organ of power to be a "bandit formation," and us to be bandits, then gunmen, and now separatists.

[Dementyeva] So what do you call yourselves?

[Zakayev] We are the army. The armed forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Yes! Even today! Everything is organized. All the structures have been preserved. Any rank-and-file soldier in the Russian Army would envy our organization. Certainly the Russian Army is 1,000 times our superior in equipment and manpower. But we are superior to it in inflicting 1,000 times more losses in equipment and manpower.

[Dementyeva] Has your position changed as a result of President Dudayev's death?

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[Zakayev] We are experiencing a very great tragedy today, but we no longer have any illusions about this or that plan proposed by Moscow. We have been deceived twice. The first time in the summer, when we signed the agreement, and the second time now, after an official public statement by the president of a great country to the effect that he is ending the war and has even nominated candidates to conduct talks with President Dudayev. And that is the second instance of perfidy on the part of the Russian political leadership. In effect, the bearer of the flag of truce was killed. Killed while carrying out his mission, while discussing terms for the talks with the Russian leadership itself.

[Dementyeva] How do you assess the efforts of the present Groznyy authorities? After all, they also declare that they are doing a lot for peace here.

[Zakayev] No way. We have no words to comment on Zavgayev's statements or actions. They are the offspring of the Russian- Chechen war. When the war ends, that regime will end. We regard them as representatives of the forces of occupation. Every people has them. Unfortunately, the Chechens are no exception. We have no need to comment, to analyze the deeds of these...people. We deal with the Russian political leadership, which unleashed and will not end this war. All the rest is mere semblance and farce.

[Dementyeva] But surely some scenarios exist under which it is possible for things to end in peace?

[Zakayev] As long as there are Russian troops here, it is no use entertaining the illusion that this or that scenario will work. The only way to stop the war is by withdrawing the troops.

[Dementyeva] Will the elections in Russia do anything to end the war? Do you see anyone who could change the policy on Chechnya?

[Zakayev] Everyone is playing the Chechen card now. Let me remind you: Of all the statements the various candidates make, we expect nothing for ourselves. Absolutely nothing. We know that this war can only be ended by appropriate countermeasures by our side. The Russian leadership is taking no diplomatic or political measures today. The war can only be stopped by means of war.

[Dementyeva] Do you accept a prolonged, exhausting guerrilla war?

[Zakayev] We are prepared for that. We have been waging this war for 436 years now [reference to Ivan the Terrible's southern campaigns]. We're used to it.

[Dementyeva] Don't you think the war could prove suicidal for the Chechen people? Russia is a big country and strongly armed.

[Zakayev] As of today, Russia has made use of its entire potential, including outer space. And we have been standing up to it for 18 months now.

[Dementyeva] But maybe that's not living. You are a man with a peaceful profession, a man of art....

[Zakayev] Give us that "other kind of living." I've taken nothing away from you. They've taken my home, my job, my beloved profession. They've taken everything from me, and given me only this (he shows his automatic weapon). With one edict, one stroke of the pen, they made me a bandit. Well, I accepted that too.

[Dementyeva] Your comrades?

[Zakayev] My comrades too. We have no choice. Nobody asked us. It was imposed on us. Imposed by force, using Russia's entire military might.

[Dementyeva] Do your people support you?

[Zakayev] Do you really think that this resistance is just the work of a small group of gunmen, to this day? The people are at war. [Zakayev ends]

Akhmed Zakayev's speech is colored by strong feeling about the killing of Dzhokhar Dudayev. Furthermore, while I was in Chechnya, throughout the four days before May arrived, Goyskoye, where Zakayev's positions are, and the villages adjacent to Goyskoye were shelled and bombed by the federal troops. There were substantial losses, including civilians. Zakayev may allow his feelings to rule his thoughts to some extent. But here is an extract from a conversation with a professional military man, Aslan Maskhadov. My colleague Abdula Vatsuyev, editor of a Groznyy newspaper, met with him. A knowledge of the standpoint of one of the most influential Chechen officers seems to me to be particularly important just now. I quote from the VOICE OF THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC, 26 April 1996. When this interview took place, Dudayev was still alive.

[Boxed biographical note] Aslan Maskhadov — colonel, chief of the Armed Forces Main Staff, deputy commander in chief of the Chechen Republic Armed Forces. Born 1951. Served in the Soviet Army from 1969. Graduated from the Artillery Academy in 1981. In December 1994-January 1995, led the defense of the presidential palace in Groznyy. Granted the rank of general by edict of President Dudayev. In summer 1995 he was General Romanov's partner at the talks.

[Vatsuyev] Aslan, recently the question of a third force in the talks process has been discussed actively; in this

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connection may analysts and politicians in Moscow very often characterize you extremely positively as a man, as a politician, and as a military expert, and believe that the Kremlin should conduct the talks through you. What is your view?

[Maskhadov] I don't think the talks should be conducted through me. We have a president, we have a parliament, we have a cabinet of ministers, we have a government with which these talks should be conducted. I am only a small part of the state and I do my duty. So even the fact that they have hitherto said, for instance, that talks should be conducted with Avturkhanov, talks should be conducted with Khadzhiyev, talks should be conducted with Zavgayev, talks should be conducted with the field commanders, talks should be conducted with Maskhadov, talks should be conducted with every village — it's a blind alley. It does no good. So if Yeltsin has finally made the right decision to meet with Dudayev, even if only through intermediaries, that is the level that the talks should be conducted at.

We, as a warring party, as Chechens, will do everything to accelerate this process, to conduct political talks. That is my job, rather than trying to make out who ought to be in power and who is most legitimate.

[Vatsuyev] It was claimed in the media that you had nothing to do with the events in Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye and that you take a negative view of them. Is that true?

[Maskhadov] I have not, never have had, and do not intend to have anything to do with any terrorist acts at all.

I became involved in the Pervomayskoye events and played an active part in them after it was announced by the command of the federal troops that all the hostages were dead and I realized that they had decided to annihilate everyone there: hostages and soldiers. That was when I carried out a large-scale operation to free the hostages and lead my men out of that ring (encirclement). And we did that successfully.

[Vatsuyev] Aslan, let us assume the worst case: a prolonged war, casualties. At the moment the number of civilian casualties is given by some people as 50,000 and by others as 90,000. Could it be 200,000, 300,000? And from that point of view, the people who ask, do we want freedom and sovereignty at such a price — don't they have some grounds for thinking that?

[Maskhadov] Freedom does not come easily, freedom must be won, even, perhaps, with casualties. Our fathers and grandfathers spent 300 years fighting for freedom, and we will fight, and nothing will stop us. The fact that the politicians today are making the whole thing into a card in the election campaign and gambling on that card, that is what could make the war a prolonged war.... It looked as if there was at least some kind of talks process going on, but then the hostilities resumed again. We rely most of all on ourselves, on our own efforts.

Economic Issues

Russia: Davydov: Paris Club Agreement Key for Russian Economy

LD0505163396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1246 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 5 (INTERFAX) — The program of granting the $10 billion credit to Russia by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the destiny of this year's federal budget would have come into question if the agreement on restructuring Moscow's $38 billion debt had not been signed with the Paris Club Paris, Foreign Economic Relations Minister Oleg Davydov told Interfax in an exclusive interview.

"Under the strict conditions of the IMF credit, Russia's spending on covering its foreign debt is confined to $8 billion, which figures in this year's budget," he explained. However this sum would have almost doubled, if the agreement on a 25-year delay in repaying the credits granted to the former USSR had not been reached with the Paris Club in late April, Davydov said.

"Without that agreement Moscow's payments to the official creditors [the Paris Club] alone would have amounted to $8 billion, and they would have absorbed all the budgetary allocations for servicing Russia's entire foreign debt, including payments to the London Club, individual creditor countries and banks," Davydov said.

As a result, "the enlarged credit program and the implementation of this year's budget would have come into question with ensuing consequences for the country's economy and for the sociopolitical situation in Russia," he pointed out.

Now, "thanks to the agreement reached with the Paris Club, payments to that international organization will make up only $2 billion, which will make it possible for the government to keep within the budget and comply with the IMF terms," he said.

The members of the Paris Club decided to sign their agreement with Moscow before the presidential elections in Russia in order to display their confidence in the policy of reforms pursued by President Boris Yeltsin, and contribute to the normal course of economic and social reforms in Russia on the eve of the presidential elections, independent Russian observers said.

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Russia: Nuclear Plant Deal With Iran Examined

964E1159A Moscow INTERFAKS - AIF in Russian 22-28 Apr 96 No 16, p 2

[Article by Petr Mokshin: "Is Russia Promoting Proliferation of the Nuclear Threat?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Moscow summit on nuclear safety once again called attention to the Russian-Iranian contract for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Bushehr. A resolution of the conflict surrounding this business deal would exert a serious influence on Russia's positions on the world nuclear energy market and would influence the geopolitical struggle for influence in a most important region of the world.

Despite the active protests of high-ranking officials within the country and the resistance on the part of the United States, Russia has already embarked on the construction of the nuclear power plant in Iran and intends to complete it in the year 2000. The project, the estimated cost of which is $800 million, is considered one of the biggest in the sphere of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In addition, similar contracts with India and China and, in a broader plane, the outcome of the competitive struggle on the world energy market will depend on its implementation to a large extent.

The contract is actively opposed in Russia by Academician Aleksey Yablokov, leader of the Interdepartmental Commission of the Russian Federation Security Council for Environmental Safety, who is an authority in the country and overseas. On the eve of the Moscow summit he once again issued statements to the effect that the construction of the nuclear power plant would mean a colossal step forward on the way to Iran's creation of its own nuclear weapons and would create a threat to Russia's security. Yablokov does not trust the statements of Iranian officials to the effect that they have no such intention. "Why, then, does Iran, with its huge reserves of oil and gas, need to build a nuclear power plant—a dangerous nuclear enterprise," the scientist inquires.

In the opinion of pessimists, the proliferation even of peaceful nuclear technology will rapidly increase the number of countries that possess nuclear weapons. Even today, according to certain information, aside from the superpowers, South Africa, India, and Israel have such.

The United States does not tire of reminding people of its concern in connection with the spread of nuclear technology, which will, most likely, be used for military purposes. For their part, specialists of the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy categorically reject any possibility of the creation of a nuclear bomb on the basis of the technology and material which the Iranians will have. In an interview with the weekly INTERFAKS - AIF Lev Ryabev, first deputy minister for atomic energy, declared that the reactor being installed there "is unsuitable in terms of its technical specifications for the production of weapons-grade nuclear materials." A deterrent factor for Iran, according to him, will also be Tehran's accession to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and supervision of the construction on the part of the IAEA. Ryabev observed that thus far "not one inspection has revealed signs of nuclear military research being conducted." When such contracts are realized, Russia will obviously have to intensify considerably its functions of control of the nuclear programs in Iran and other countries. Specialists of the Ministry of Atomic Energy consider this realistic. These arguments are also shared in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which consented to the conclusion of the contract.

Many government foreign trade experts experienced in the niceties of ruthless international competition are sure that even were Moscow to abandon the construction of the plant in Bushehr, it would be taken up by someone else, all the same. Some people would appear to know even precisely which company would take Russia's place in the event of cancellation of the contract. And then, they believe, the United States would no longer have any objections to the appearance of a nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

If this is the case, the problem goes beyond one of "permitting" or "prohibiting" this country or the other from building the nuclear power plant and switches to the geopolitical category. It is a question of the possibilities and system of control of the realization of nuclear programs and the degree of influence of the "controller" not only of an individual sector of a state but of its military-political orientation also.

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International Affairs

Ukraine: Ukrainian, Polish Foreign Ministers Meet in Strasbourg

LD0305142896 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1220 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — During his official visit to the Council of Europe, Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Hennadiy Udovenko met Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Dariusz Rosati. In particular, they discussed the upcoming state visit to Poland by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and his participation in a meeting of central European presidents. The sides confirmed the necessity of making the consultative committee of the two countries' presidents more active, which would help deepen cooperation in all directions.

Particular attention was paid to Ukrainian-Polish cooperation at an interregional level, particularly taking into account the activities of the Carpathian Euroregion and the Bug Euroregion associations, and the Ukrainian-Polish Coordinative Council for Interregional Cooperation issues.

Ukraine: Further on Udovenko, Primakov Meeting in Strasbourg

WS0605083996 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0611 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 4 — Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko negotiated with the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Yevgeniy Primakov, during his visit to the Council of Europe on Friday, discussing present and future bilateral relations between the two countries with special attention given to the upcoming visit of Russian President, Boris Yeltsin.

Appealing to Moscow "not to connect the questions of the Black Sea Fleet that separate us with the visit of the Russian President", Udovenko told ITAR-TASS that Yeltsin is welcome in Ukraine any time, and he noted that Ukraine does not connect Yeltsin's visit to the June 6 Presidential elections in Russia.

According to a spokesman from Ukraine's Foreign Ministry, NATO expansion and its perspectives were also discussed by the two ministers. Russia has strongly objected to NATO expansion in the East, and on Russia's initiative the military union of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Belarus was created in 1991. The corresponding agreement was signed in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan.

Ukraine, on the other hand, is seeking to intensify its "special partnership" with NATO. Speaking at the Foreign Affairs Ministry's (FAM) briefing, Ihor Kharchenko, the high level FAM official handling NATO issues in the Ukrainian government, noted that NATO does not consider the Tashkent's treaty as a potential threat.

However, Ukraine, announcing its neutral state in 1990 (18 months before the vote for independence in December, 1991) is afraid of becoming a buffer state between the expanded North Atlantic Organization and the Tashkent treaty states, as repeatedly stated by President Kuchma.

"Today some Ukrainian politicians say senselessly that we have to approve the movement of NATO expansion on the East", Parliament Speaker Oleksandr Moroz said at Wednesday's meeting of leftist forces in Kiev.

Udovenko and Primakov also discussed the results of the Council of Europe's 98th Ministers' Committee meeting, agreeing to hold regular meetings to discuss the most urgent issues facing Ukrainian-Russian relations.

Ukraine: Foreign Minister Signs European Social Charter, Others

LD0305142796 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1200 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Hennadiy Udovenko attended the 98th session of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg yesterday. On the same day, on behalf of Ukraine, he signed the European Social Charter, the charter on regional languages and the languages of ethnic minorities, and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatments or Punishment.

The UNIAN news agency learned at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry that these documents were signed in the context of Ukraine carrying out the obligations it assumed when entering the Council of Europe. The conventions were signed on behalf of the Council of Europe by its secretary-general, Daniel Tarschys.

Ukraine: Udovenko Stresses Rights of Ethnic Ukrainians in Bosnia

WS0605093796 Kiev UKRINFORM in English 0656 GMT 6 May 96

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's press center reported, on May 3 the EuroCouncil Ministerial Committee continued its session in Strasbourg.

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During the debate on the Dayton agreements' implementation and construction of independent Bosnia-Herzegovina [B-H], Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko made a speech to draw the attendants' attenion to solving the problem of safeguarding the Ukrainian ethnic minority's rights within the region.

As it was noted by the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, the Ukrainian Diaspora, which is among the numerically largest ones in Bosnia-Herzegovina, suffered from persecutions, descrimination and massive violations of human rights during the Yugoslav armed conflict. Many ethnic Ukrainians were killed or forced to leave their homes, Mr. Udovenko stated, and urged the session to pass adequate and objective judgment by the world community on the war-time crimes and atrocities against the Ukrainian ethnic minority in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister also called for using the authority of international institutions, the EuroCouncil included, with a view of assisting government bodies in Bosnia-Herzegovina in rectifying the human rights situation there.

To this end, Mr. Udovenko proposed to resolve the issue of compensations payable to ethnic Ukrainians in Bosnia-Herzegovina for damage they have suffered as a result of hostilities in the former Yugoslavia, and the problem of safeguarding human rights and basic freedoms in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The day before, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister signed, on behalf of Ukraine, the European Social Charter, the Charter on regional languages of ethnic minorities, and the Convention on prevention of tortures, inhumane or humiliating treatment or punishment of individuals.

The above European documents were signed in the context of Ukraine's commitments at the time it acceded to the Council of Europe.

The documents were signed by EuroCouncil Secretary-General Daniel Tarshis on behalf of the Council of Europe.

Ukraine: Foreign Minister Seeks Compensation for Bosnian Ukrainians

LD0305151096 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1200 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — During a discussion at the 98th session of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers today, on implementation of the Dayton agreements and the development of a democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Hennadiy Udovenko proposed that the issue of compensating the region's ethnic Ukrainians for their losses and guaranteeing their rights and basic freedoms in the future should be resolved. Hennadiy Udovenko noted in his speech that one of the largest diasporas in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Ukrainian one, experienced persecution and discrimination during the conflict. Hennadiy Udovenko called on his counterparts to make the proper international assessment of the crimes committed against the Ukrainian minority, and to make use of the authority of international organizations, particularly the Council of Europe, to more speedily right the given situation.

Ukraine: Deputies: 'Overwhelming Majority' Support Chechen Cause

AU0305140096 Kiev MOLOD UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 30 Apr 96 p 1

[Undated letter in Russian "To Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, president of the Republic of Ichkeria; Aslan Maskhadov, commander of the Headquarters of the Chechen Republic Armed Forces; and Shamil Basayev, chief commander of the Armed Forces of the Caucasian Peoples" signed by 18 Ukraine's people's deputies, including L. Kravchuk, I. Plyushch, M. Ratushnyy, I. Bilas, D. Chobit, S. Khmara, V. Mulyava, and others]

[FBIS Translated Text] There are some events that are impossible to believe. For us, one such was the report of the tragic death of Dzhokhar Dudayev, leader of the national liberation struggle of the Chechen people, who was legally elected president of the Republic of Ichkeria.

The Man [initial capital as published], who personified the people's struggle for freedom and independence, has died.

General Dudayev was an enemy of Russian imperialism and a friend of the Ukrainian people. Even with his death (on his way to negotiations with a Russian representative), he showed that all talk by official Moscow about its desire to settle the conflict in Chechnya by peaceful means is an insidious deception.

We express our condolences to President Dudayev's family and friends and to all the heroic Chechen people.

We are convinced that, despite the tragic loss, the people of Ichkeria will struggle even more decisively for their independence and will achieve it.

Remember that an overwhelming majority of Ukrainian citizens shows solidarity with your struggle. For your and our freedom! Long live the invincible Chechen people! Eternal memory to Chechen hero Dzhokhar Dudayev!

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Ukraine: UNA Thanks Kuchma for Aiding Release of Members in Minsk

LD0505210496 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian 2000 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The Ukrainian National Assembly [UNA] has circulated a statement on the release of Ukrainian citizens who were jailed in Minsk on 26 April.

The UNA expressed its gratitude to the first secretary of the Ukrainian Embassy in Belarus and the Ukrainian minister of foreign affairs for steps taken in this matter. The UNA extended special thanks to Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma for "personally attending to the release of UNA-UNSD [Ukrainian National Assembly - Ukrainian National Self Defense] members despite the fact that this organization opposes the policy of his administration."

"If this keeps up, we will eventually achieve national solidarity," says the UNA statement.

Ukraine: Kiev Ratifies U.S.-Ukrainian Agreement on Space Use

LD0505202496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1733 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, May 5 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The Ukrainian parliament Sunday ratified an intergovernmental agreement with the United States on the study and peaceful use of space.

The agreement, signed on December 14 in Vienna, envisages the commercial use of Ukrainian boosters.

About 20 commercial launches of Ukrainian Zenith and Cyclone boosters carrying U.S. satellites, including under the Sea Start project, are planned until the year 2002.

Ukraine has the right to define the goals and nature of 11 of these launches.

The first launch of a Zenith-3SL booster from a sea platform may be made in February 1998.

Ukraine: Joint U.S. Project To Remove Radioactive Contaminants

LD0305145596 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1220 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The U.S. and Ukrainian Governments have signed a memorandum of mutual understanding, which is the beginning of a joint project to remove radioactive contaminants from milk, drinking water, juices, and baby food made in Ukraine. The document was signed by Leonid Svatkov, chairman of the Ukrainian State Committee for the Food Industry, and representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy and the American firm Selentec, the UNIAN news agency learned at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine. The project for decontaminated foods will be carried out in two stages, for which the U.S. Energy Department is to allocate a total of $560,000 and the Selentec firm another $480,000. Ukrainian scientists, engineers, and technical personnel will be involved in the project.

It is envisaged that technology for removing cesium (up to 95 percent of it), which at present is the prevailing radioactive contaminant in Ukraine, will be used to decontaminate the products. It is planned to process milk, drinking water, juices, and baby foods first.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Fleet Commander Urges Veterans To Support Yeltsin

LD0505121796 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1040 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sevastopol [no date as received] — The Black Sea Fleet has been based in Sevastopol for 213 years and this city will remain its main base, Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, Black Sea Fleet Commander, stated at a meeting with World War II veterans.

The admiral said the Black Sea Fleet would hold a parade in Sevastopol on 9 May [Victory Day]. Representatives of Russian cities, regions, and districts that extend their patronage to the [Black Sea] fleet, will hold a conference on 22 May.

Kravchenko also called on those present to vote in favor of Boris Yeltsin at the presidential election in Russia. The veterans loyal to Gennadiy Zyuganov responded with indignation to the admiral's appeal.

Ukraine: Belarusian, Russian Nationalists Attend UNA-UNSD Conference

LD0405202596 Moscow NTV in Russian 1800 GMT 4 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Reports on the illegal visit to the republic by Russian nationalists have caused a kind of shock in Ukraine.

Since 1991, Ukrainian national-patriots have been taking part in combat actions against the Russian army in hot spots of the former Union. Despite that, a unifying congress, at which their Russian and Belarusian colleagues were received with all honors, took place in a western district of Ukraine. Here are the details in a report by our correspondents.

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[Correspondent Sergey Barabanov from Lvov] Ukrainian press of all political hues is actively whipping up reports about leaders of the extreme right-wing movements of the three Slav republics.

[Begin Sergey Kolomiyets recording, organizer western region of UNSA-UNSD, identified by caption] In official invitation documents, this conference was called a "Conference-Report" of Belarusian and Russian organizations and the leadership of UNA-UNSD [Ukrainian Assembly-Ukrainian National Defense]. It will be more difficult as far as some participants are concerned for some have arrived without advertising that fact. [end recording]

[Barabanov] The version of illegal participants in the meeting may possibly serve to conceal the fact that the public at large is not saying much about the rest of the participants, apart from Eduard Limonov and his national Bolshevik party.

[Begin Kolomiyets recording] Slavs make up a very small part and the prospects for the unification of Slavs in a union, in a council [rad], in Kiev Rus, which we would like, for instance...[pauses] is inevitable. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Ukraine: Parliament Resumes Discussion of Draft Constitution

LD0505194696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1711 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 5 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada [Supreme Council] resumed the debate at its meeting on Sunday morning on the draft national Constitution and the make-up of the interim conference committee for finalizing the draft Constitution as was proposed by the Constitutional Committee.

Yet, the proposed draft resolution to this effect as well as that endorsing the composition of the conference committee made up on a proportional basis from among representatives of all of the parliamentary groups and factions have failed to gain the required number of votes.

The focus of the dispute remains the principle for the formation of such a committee: on the basis of either equal or proportionate representation of groups and factions. Parliament Speaker Oleksandr Moroz upholds proportional representation.

Ihor Yukhnovskyy of the Derzhavnist (Statehood) faction proposed that communist MPs should familiarize themselves with the outcome of the work done by the "ginger" conference committee made up of representatives of all of the parliamentary groups with the exception of the communists. According to Yukhnovskyy, the committee has succeeded within a month to "practically complete the effort to reach agreement on the draft new Constitution".

A decision on the formation of a special conference committee was made by Verkhovna Rada way back on April 24, but its make-up has not been endorsed yet.

Ukraine: Fire on Lysychansk-Tikhoretsk Oil Pipeline Extinguished

LD0505194996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1711 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 5 (Interfax - Ukraine) — One man was badly injured as a result of the fire on one of the sections of the Lysychansk-Tikhoretsk oil pipeline in Luhansk region.

A resident of the Nizhnee populated locality has been taken to hospital with burns of the third grade, an Interfax-Ukraine correspondent was told at the Ukrainian Civil Defence Headquarters. A total of six private houses and three farmsteads have burnt to the ground in that populated locality.

Fire was caused by rupture in a pipeline at 9:35 on Saturday on the 21st kilometer of the pipeline near the Gorskoye populated locality. The river Belaya, which is a tributary to the Severskiy Donets river has been polluted with oil. According to the specified information, the accident was caused by a landslide. Fire was extinguished at 15:30 on May 4. The causes of the fire are being currently investigated.

Oil is being pumping out round the clock with the use of mobile pump stations units to prevent further pollution of the river. The Civil Defence units have built three dikes and two oil traps near the Nizhnee populated locality. A total of 57 Civil Defence officers, 78 Interior Ministry officers and five units of engineering construction equipment are involved in the elimination of the aftermath of the accident.

Economic Issues

Ukraine: Marchuk: Cooperation With World Bank Depends on Ukraine

LD0505193996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1447 GMT 5 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk told journalists in Kiev that he hopes for continuation of Ukraine's cooperation with the World Bank

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and that this cooperation is very promising. Ukraine runs numerous economically important projects jointly with the World Bank such as the Fund of Export Guarantees and World Bank guarantees for the Sea Start project.

Marchuk said that the government had issued an ordinance defining the procedure of implementing World Bank's projects in Ukraine. Further expansion of cooperation with the World Bank depends, above all, on Ukraine, he believes.

Oleksandr Moroz, chairman of the Supreme Soviet, also praised the level of cooperation between the World Bank and Ukraine.

During a meeting in Kiev Saturday with Daniel Kaufman, head of the World Bank's office in Ukraine, Moroz said that in cooperation with the bank "Ukraine has had an experience of concluding international financial agreements and learned how to plan the use of foreign aid and credits."

Moroz also said that the Supreme Soviet has supported the World Bank projects represented to parliament by the government or banking institutions. "Every credit agreement must be a stage of development, of the country moving forward. We will consistently use this approach to cooperation with the World Bank," he emphasized.

Kaufman said that the World Bank will continue cooperation with Ukraine. Unlike other countries where the bank deals only with governments, the bank has in Ukraine "close contacts with all branches of the authority and Ukrainian MPs and experts share in the planning of joint projects," he said.

Moroz and Kaufman agreed that the bank's credits must be used above all, to modernize and overhaul the manufacturing industries.

Moroz said that joint programs of overhauling the energy and coal mining industries and the municipal transport are promising for foreign investments.

Ukraine: Kuchma Insists on Closure of Inefficient Coal Pits

LD0505194496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1711 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, May 5 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Inefficient coal pits must be closed, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma told a government meeting Sunday.

If a pit does not produce coal, the government should act rather than debate, he stressed.

"The government should monthly consider the complicated and tense situation in the coal industry," he said.

Preparations for the closure of 24 coal pits and one opencast development began in 1995, Coal Industry Minister Serhiy Kulyakov told the meeting. Another 14 pits and one opencast development joined them in 1996. Once the shutdown program is accomplished, the coal industry will save 33 trillion karbovantsy.

The Ministry of Coal Industry plans to export 1.5 million tonnes of steaming coal by the end of this summer, which will bring profits of 7.5 trillion karbovantsy, Kulyakov said.

Ukraine produced 19.4 million tonnes of coal in the first quarter of 1996, which is 3.8 million tonnes less than planned and 4.4 million tonnes less than in the same period in 1995, he said.

Back wages in the coal industry exceeded 82 trillion karbovantsy on May 1, he said.

Kulyakov confirmed that the Donetsk coal strike committee planned to hold an assembly on May 13 to decide on whether to launch a new strike on May 15.

Ukraine: Minister Briefs on Deteriorating Situation in Coal Industry

WS0605084896 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0138 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 5 — While the government has allocated KBV32 [karbovantsi] trillion so far this year to pay coal miner wages, four million tons of coal lie spoiling in Ukrainian warehouses, First Deputy Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko told a Sunday Cabinet of Ministers session.

The session, attended by President Leonid Kuchma and chaired by Lazarenko, was held to discuss implementation of a Kuchma decree calling for coal industry restructuring.

The Kuchma measure calls for corporatization of MinVuhleProm enterprises into open associations with the right to sell their products at negotiated prices. Some cost non-effective mines are to be leased, privatized or closed.

Coal Industry Minister Serhiy Polyakov said that some tasks set by the President are being solved slowly and behind schedule.

Meanwhile, the situation in the coal industry is deteriorating.

In the first quarter of 1996, 19.4 million tons of coal were produced, 4.4 million tons less than the same period last year.

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Productivity is dropping, while production cost is soaring. While coal mines work at 58 percent of their capacity, processing plants work only at 29 percent. As a result, consumers get less coal of a poorer quality.

Only 10 to 15 percent of production is paid in cash. As of April 1, the industry's accounts receivable reached KBV338.7 trillion, exceeding accounts payable by KBV173 trillion.

According to Polyakov, closure of the 38 most unprofitable mines would reduce coal industry losses this year by KBV33 trillion.

Ukraine: January Economic Statistics Reported

964K0098A Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 5 Mar 96 p 6

[Report of the Main Administration for Economic Matters of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: "The Economy of Ukraine in January 1996"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The beginning of 1996 is characterized by a continued decline in production in all sectors of the national economy.

According to preliminary data, the **gross domestic product** decreased 12.6 percent in January as compared with the corresponding period in 1995 (in January 1995, it had declined 12.8 percent [as against January 1994]). The GDP was estimated to amount to 506 trillion karbovantsi.

The volume of **industrial output** fell 3.6 percent as against January of last year (16.7 percent in January 1995). The decrease in output was especially large at enterprises in the industrial building materials industry (47 percent), light industry (39 percent), machinebuilding and metalworking (29.8 percent), the timber, woodworking, and pulp and paper industry (26.3 percent), Zakarpattya Oblast (34.5 percent), Chernivtsi Oblast (33.4 percent), Lviv Oblast (25.9 percent), and Kirovohrad Oblast (25.3 percent).

Production volumes increased as compared with the same period last year in Ternopil (29.7 percent), Zaporizhzhya (3.5 percent), and Kherson (1.1 percent) oblasts.

The volume of output in January of this year decreased 9.5 percent as against December 1995.

A large number of industrial enterprises did not work at all in January or worked only a few days, which resulted in a significant drop in production volumes.

	Rate of growth, decline (—), in %		
	January 1996 as against January 1995	January 1995 as against January 1994	Share of individual branches of industry in the total volume of production, in %
Total for industry	—3.6	—16.7	100
including:			
electric power engineering	3.8	5.0	18.3
fuel industry	3.1	—28.5	12.8
ferrous metallurgy	11.5	—13.3	21.3
nonferrous metallurgy	—2.8	—1.4	1.5
chemical and petrochemical industry	2.8	—7.8	7.6
machinebuilding and metalworking	—29.8	—28.9	14.0
timber, woodworking, and pulp and paper industry	—26.3	—19.5	2.2
building materials industry	—47.0	—25.1	2.1
light industry	—39.0	—39.2	2.1
food industry	—7.1	—18.6	12.6
flour and groats and mixed feed industry	—11.5	—6.5	3.1

The Performance of Individual Sectors of the National Economy

Coal industry enterprises filled their coal extraction quota by 82.2 percent, including the coking coal quota by 90.6 percent; they fell short of projected targets by 1,342,000 metric tons of coal and 229,500 metric tons of coking coal. As compared with January of last year, the volume of coal output decreased 20 percent and amounted to 6.2 million metric tons, with coking coal output dropping 18.1 percent and amounting to 2.2. million metric tons. Of 23 associations and 16

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independent mines, only four associations and six mines met the monthly target.

The production of **electric power** remained virtually at the same level as in December 1995 (19.0 billion kilowatt-hours —an increase of 0.1 percent), which was 1.9 percent less than in January 1995. The increase in output was due solely to nuclear electric power stations, where it amounted to 0.3 percent as against January and 11.2 percent as against December of last year.

The decrease in the total output of electric power, primarily attributable to thermal electric power stations, was caused by a drop in the demand for power for production needs because of an overall decline in the country's economy, as well as growing insolvency on the part of consumers, making payment for fuel difficult. On 1 February 1996, the debt obligations of consumers to Energy Ministry enterprises amounted to 149.8 trillion karbovantsi, and credit obligations to fuel suppliers [kredytorska zaborhovanist postachalnykam palyva] totalled 206.3 trillion karbovantsi.

The volume of primary refining [pervynnoyi pererobky] of **oil** increased 16 percent as against January 1995; 1,248,100 metric tons of oil were refined. Gasoline output increased 4 percent, that of diesel fuel, 15 percent. The output of fuel mazut [palyvnoho mazutu] dropped by 3 percent.

There were certain positive changes in **ferrous metallurgy** as compared with January 1995. The output of cast iron increased 11.6 percent, steel — 8.2 percent, coke — 5.3 percent, finished rolled metal — 19.8 percent, and steel pipes — 48.4 percent. Production using advanced technologies grew. At the same time, the output of all products, with the exception of manganese ore, failed to match the level reached in December [of last year].

The output of the overwhelming majority of products at enterprises in the **machinebuilding complex** continued to fall.

The volume of output in the **chemical and petrochemical industry** increased as against January of last year by 2.8 percent. There is evidence of growth in the output of individual chemical products. Thus 34-35 percent more soda ash and chemical fibers and thread were produced than in January 1995, and the output of synthetic ammonia, sulphuric acid, and mineral fertilizers also rose as against December of last year.

In January, **agricultural enterprises** concentrated their efforts on preparing for spring field work and the wintering of livestock. Farms are looking after [provodytsya nahlyad za] winter crops and perennial grasses.

A great deal of attention is being devoted to providing agricultural producers with seed. As of 1 February, public-sector agricultural enterprises had laid in 1.5 million metric tons (105.1 percent of the planned amount) of seed for spring grain and pulse crops (excluding corn and reserve stocks [strakhovi fondy]), including 749,700 metric tons of spring barley (119 percent), 8,100 metric tons of millet (146.9 percent), 40,300 metric tons of buckwheat (108 percent), and 457,700 metric tons of pulse crops (87.7 percent) for the current harvest. They lay in 492,900 metric tons (97 percent of the planned amount) of spring grain and pulse crops (excluding corn) into reserve stocks [strakhovi fondy].

At the same time, less seed for grain and pulse crops than the planned amount was procured by farms in Poltava Oblast (97 percent), Kirovohrad Oblast (97.4 percent), and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (98.1 percent).

Just as last year, not a single oblast has adequate supplies of corn seed; the shortfall amounts to nearly 112,400 metric tons (the level of supplies in Ukraine as a whole measures 71.4 percent, with levels in individual oblasts ranging from 92 to 72.7 percent).

In January of this year, agricultural producers were supplied 15,600 metric tons (19.1 percent) less gasoline and 27,300 metric tons (18.5 percent) less diesel fuel than in January of last year. On 1 February, agricultural enterprises had 81,700 metric tons of gasoline (5,700 metric tons, or 6.6. percent, less than on the same date in 1995) and 186,700 metric tons of diesel fuel (3,000 metric tons, or 1.6 percent, more). Only 8.7 percent of the gasoline and 9.4 percent of the diesel fuel were supplied by state sources.

The situation in animal husbandry remains difficult. Compared with January of last year, public-sector agricultural enterprises produced 36 percent less meat, 17 percent less milk, and 9 percent fewer eggs.

The drop in the output of livestock products is caused by a reduction in the volume of these products sold to procurement organizations and directly to consumers. In particular, sales of cattle and poultry by all categories of farms totalled 55,900 metric tons (liveweight), which was 49,200 metric tons (47 percent) less than in January of last year, of milk and dairy products — 222,000 metric tons, or 111,900 metric tons (33 percent) less, and of eggs — 147.8 million, or 55.2 million (27 percent) less [than in the corresponding period last year].

The average weight of one head of neat cattle sold in January by public-sector farms to procurement organizations was 335 kilograms as compared with 344 kg last

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year and 369 kg in January of 1994; of pigs — 100, 93, and 103 kg, respectively.

The growth of animal husbandry is being held back by an inadequate feed base, even though in January public-sector farms managed to maintain the same level of feed supplies as last year. On 1 February, feed supplies amounted to 13.6 million metric tons of feed units, or 1 percent more than in 1995. Feed units per one standard head of neat cattle amounted to 10.1 quintals (8.7 in 1995 and 10.5 quintals in 1994).

Investment activity on the part of enterprises and organizations in January was very limited.

The lack of an approved state budget made settlements more difficult between contractors and clients for construction jobs that had been performed, hampered setting up programs for contract jobs, and worsened the financial condition of building organizations. Limited financial resources and large arrears on the part of clients for jobs performed last year made supplying building projects with the necessary material and technical resources and fuel and lubricants more difficult.

The amount of freight carried by public **railroad transport** totalled 22.2 million metric tons, which was 15 percent less than in January of last year. There was a drop in the haulage of such important freight for the national economy as cement (by one-half), timber and lumber [lis i lisomaterialy] (by one-quarter [na chvert]), coal (12.4 percent), and ferrous scrap metals (2.4 percent). The shipment volumes of ferrous metals, oil and oil products, iron and manganese ores, chemical and mineral fertilizers increased somewhat, rising by 17.7, 11.4, 5.4, and 4.2 percent, respectively.

Public **motor transport** hauled 7.1 million metric tons of freight, which was nearly 50 percent less than the amount hauled in January 1995; **sea transport** was used to carry 1.1 million metric tons, or one-half as much as last January.

The Consumer Goods and Services Market

Consumer goods valued at 134 trillion karbovantsi were produced, which was 26.2 percent less than in January [1995] and 27.3 percent less than in December 1995.

The output of **nonfood consumer items** fell 39.2 percent and amounted in value to 36.6 trillion karbovantsi (in January 1995 as against the corresponding period of the year before, output had decreased 31 percent).

The output of many kinds of large household appliances and durable goods is continuing to decrease at a significant rate. Thus, for example, the output of television sets fell 59.5 percent as compared with January 1995, of which the output of color television sets dropped 76.4 percent, tape recorders — 49.7 percent, radios — 79.4 percent, washing machines — 44 percent, electric vacuum cleaners —62.5 percent, and refrigerators — 40.6 percent.

Output volumes of children's goods fell. As against January 1995, the production of baby carriages decreased by a factor of three, toys and Christmas tree decorations — fivefold, school notebooks —fourfold, children's beds — twentyfold.

Light industry enterprises were experiencing difficulties in January.

The output of all kinds of textiles decreased as compared with the corresponding period last year by 6.7 million square meters, or 38.5 percent, including cotton fabrics by 0.6 million sq m, or 8.8 percent, woolen fabrics by 1.1 million sq m, or 53.9 percent, silk fabrics by 2.8 million sq m, or 91.7 percent, and linen fabrics by 1.1 million sq m, or 43.5 percent. The largest silk combines — in Cherkasy, Lutsk, and Darnytsya — stood idle for most of the month.

The output of knitted goods decreased by 1.4 million pieces (53.2 percent), hosiery — by 5.6 million pairs (62 percent), footwear —by 0.8 million pairs (53.1 percent).

The production of children's goods, in particular pants, shirts, suits [kostyumy], and underwear for infants, amounted to 44-73 percent of last year's volumes; hosiery, knitted goods, and footwear — 36-43 percent.

The situation with respect to the production of food products remains strained. Compared with January of last year, output of **food products** fell 20.4 percent, including meat — by 42.6 percent, butter — by 24.3 percent, whole milk products — by 32.9 percent, margarine products — by 30.1 percent, canned fruits and vegetables — by 71.2 percent, salt — by 28.3 percent, confectionary products — by 30 percent, and flour — by 10.1 percent.

The principal causes of such decreases were reduced deliveries of raw materials for processing, in particular cattle, poultry, and milk, and the insolvency of trade organizations and the general public. At the same time, last year's output of granulated sugar was surpassed by a factor of 1.7 (primarily because of deliveries of imported raw materials), of oil — by 8.1 percent, of fish food products — by 32.7 percent, and of raw alcohol [spyrtsyrets] — by 38 percent.

While the output of practically all food products dropped, the decrease in the output of **baby foods** was especially large.

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Compared with January of last year, the output of Vitalact, children's cream [dytyachykh vershkiv], and kefir for infants decreased by a factor of 1.8- 2.2, cheese for infants — by three-quarters [na try chverti], and sausages [sosysky]— 28.5 percent.

Retail goods turnover in January 1996 amounted to 112.2 trillion karbovantsi, which was 6.4 percent less than the turnover volume during the same period last year (it dropped 17 percent as against December).

The volume of **paid services** amounted to 43.5 trillion karbovantsi and dropped 29.4 percent as against January of last year.

Inflationary Processes

Wholesale prices of industrial products rose 3.4 percent in January 1996 as compared with December 1995. Among these, the prices of electric power and ferrous metallurgy products rose 3.6 percent, of the chemical industry — 4.6 percent, machinebuilding —6.6 percent, the timber, woodworking, and pulp and paper industry —6.2 percent, the building materials industry — 4.1 percent, light industry — 2.5 percent, and the food industry — 0.2 percent.

There was a drop in the wholesale prices of fuel industry products — by 0.2 percent, including those of the coal industry — by 3.5 percent; the prices of products manufactured by the petrochemical industry remained at the same level as last December.

The **purchase prices of agricultural products** rose 8 percent, including those of cattle and poultry — 4 percent, milk and dairy products — 11 percent, and eggs — 15 percent.

The cost of **hauling freight** by motor transport increased 0.4 percent and by railroad transport, 9.2 percent. The cost of passenger fares on public transport rose 7.5 percent.

The consumer market **inflation index** measured 109.4 percent in January (in January 1995 — 121.2 percent).

Certain Aspects of the Living Standard of the Population

In January, the rise in the rates of paid services (by 19.3 percent), especially housing and municipal services rates, outstripped the rise in the prices of food products (6.8 percent) and nonfood consumer items (3.1 percent).

The prices of certain food products have increased significantly: butter — by 14 percent, potatoes — by 13.5 percent, cheese — by 12.4 percent, fresh vegetables and fruits — by nearly 12 percent, eggs — by 11.4 percent, fish and seafood products, meat and poultry, and milk and dairy products — by 8-9 percent. At the same time, the prices of sugar and oil dropped (2.2 and 4 percent, respectively).

Price increases among nonfood items included, in particular, the cost of publications (a rise of 8.4 percent) and of household fuel (7.1 percent).

The cost of sending children to preschool institutions rose 15 percent, tuition rates for paid courses and at educational institutions increased 10.5 percent, and rates for services provided by health care institutions climbed 9.5 percent.

On 6 February of this year, the per capita **cost of a selection of 22 essential food products** in Ukraine averaged 5,321,000 karbovantsi and had increased 5.9 percent as compared with the beginning of the year. This selection was most expensive in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (6,395,000 karbovantsi) and least expensive in Ternopil Oblast (4,455,000 karbovantsi). In Kiev, this selection cost 5,909,000 karbovantsi, putting the capital in fifth place among Ukraine's regions.

The Financial State of Enterprises and Organizations

Credit obligations between Ukraine's enterprises and organizations and economic entities in CIS and the Baltic states increased 2.5-fold during 1995, and on 1 January of this year reached 187.8 trillion karbovantsi; debt obligations increased 2.9-fold and totalled 61.4 trillion karbovantsi.

Credit obligations of Ukrainian enterprises to trade partners in Russia increased 2.4-fold during last year and at the beginning of 1996 amounted to 167.6 trillion karbovantsi (89.2 percent of the total amount of indebtedness to CIS and Baltic countries); credit obligations to Turkmenistan increased 7.5-fold and amounted to 9 trillion karbovantsi (4.8 percent).

The **volume of credit obligations between enterprises and organizations in Ukraine** increased 4.5-fold last year and at the beginning of the current year amounted to 3,054.3 trillion karbovantsi; debt obligations increased 4.5-fold and amounted to 2,225.0 trillion karbovantsi.

The **amount of overdue credit obligations** on the part of enterprises and organizations on clearing operations and bank loans increased 6.7-fold last year and on 1 January 1996 amounted to 1,134.2 trillion karbovantsi. Of this sum, 1,095.5 trillion karbovantsi (96.6 percent) was the amount owed on clearing operations between enterprises and organizations and 38.7 trillion karbovantsi (3.4 percent) was the amount of overdue payments on bank loans.

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Prepared [by the Main Administration for Economic Matters of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine] for the purpose of providing information on the basis of data supplied by the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry of Statistics, the Ministry of Finance, and the National Bank of Ukraine.

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Belarus

Belarus: Supreme Soviet Ratifies Treaty on Community With Russia

LD0405164096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1453 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, May 4 (Interfax-West) — The Belarussian Supreme Soviet (parliament) on Saturday ratified the treaty on the creation of a Community between Belarus and Russia, an Interfax correspondent reports.

A total of 166 Belarussian MPs voted "for" the ratification with two votes "against" and three abstentions.

"The treaty is primarily aimed at creating a community with a high degree of political and economic integration," Belarussian Deputy Foreign Minister Ivan Antonovich said when submitting the treaty for ratification by national parliament. "This will guarantee the free movement of goods, labor and capital in the two republics," he said.

"Belarus and Russia will retain all attributes of state sovereignty," Antonovich stressed.

Belarus: 'Presentation Document' Sent to NATO Headquarters

WS0605090896 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0656 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to information received, the Presentation Document, which was worked out by an interdepartmental commission under the Belarusian Security Council and signed by President Lukashenka is now at the Brussels-based Belarusian Embassy to the Benelux countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has sent this Document for official submission to the NATO headquarters. However the Presentation Document will be officially submitted only after the diplomatic corps and NATO representatives in Brussels translate its text into English and identify all special terms contained in it. After the Presentation Document is submitted to the NATO headquarters, work is to start on Belarus' individual Partnership for Peace programme which is to stipulate all arrangements within the framework of cooperation between the Republic and NATO, their terms and participants.

Belarus: Lukashenka Discusses Aid With World Bank Members

WS0605092196 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0300 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has met with representatives of the World Bank in Minsk. The meeting was devoted to the drafting of an agreement on the bank's financial support for economic reforms in the Republic. Meanwhile, a $37-million loan, which was extended to Belarus this year, has been frozen, because in the opinion of the bank's specialists, the privatization program is not being implemented in a satisfactory manner in the Republic.

Belarus: Lukashenka Addresses Confederation of Journalists Unions

LD0305204196 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1600 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Alyaksandr Lukashenka today met representatives of the Confederation of Journalists' Unions. Here is a recorded report by our correspondent Svyatlana Ilyushenka.

[Begin Ilyushenka recording] The participants of the meeting, who came to the residence of the Belarusian president, focused their attention on the relations between the authorities and the press. It was stressed that today, as ever before in our society, there is an acute need for objective, comprehensive, and up-to-date information. However, first of all, it should be objective and truthful. I think that it is impossible to disagree with this.

The conversation between the president and the delegation from the Confederation of Journalists' Unions, headed by its president, Eduard Sagalayev, chairman of the Russian Television Company, sought to find ways for the mutual understanding between the authorities and the press. Here is an excerpt from the address of the Belarusian president.

[Lukashenka, in Russian] I am convinced, Eduard Mikhaylovich [Sagalayev], that I will find an understanding first of all with you and your colleagues, because I can see here not some [word indistinct] journalists but pragmatic people with whom I have always been able to find joint approaches [word indistinct] moreover that, as I often stress, I was involved in journalism for four years when I was a student and even edited an [word indistinct] institute's newspaper. Therefore, I am acquainted with your profession. I must say that in my personal history journalism has played a decisive role. At the time when I was a deputy and had a difficult time and when I was pressurized from every direction [words indistinct] other weaker forces, journalists supported me very actively. Therefore, it will be unfair of me to disregard journalists and I will never do that. I repeat, I have never done that.

But you must agree that we have lost a lot through the fact that in our quite large country, it is characteristic both of Russia and Belarus, there has virtually been no

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power. We thought that we were a democratic country and that power was not necessary in a democratic country. I went into my election campaign with the following theses: It is necessary to find a person who will (?revive) power and will implement it, because power is the main element of any [word indistinct] democratic state. [passage indistinct]

You must forgive me, but when ordinary citizens, after the power is formed, this power must be [word indistinct] power. All — the first, the second, the third, the fourth power. [passage omitted including indistinct portions]

[Ilyushenka] This conversation on all its most important aspects was continued by the representatives of the Confederation of Journalists' Union at a traditional festival of the Belarusian journalism, Golden Pen, which began today. [end recording]

Belarus: Journalist Association Protests 'Dictatorship, Police Rule'

WS0605083596 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0656 GMT 6 May 96

[All quotation marks as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minsk, 3 May. The Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) has made a statement in view of evidence of the abridgement of the freedom of the press and the freedom of professional journalist activities in Belarus. Edward Tarletski, a correspondent of the Radio Liberty Belarusian service, was seriously injured as a result of a hit in his head with a militia truncheon. Cezary Golinski, a correspondent of the Polish newspaper GAZETA WYBORCZA accredited in Minsk was hit with a truncheon in his face. In addition, militia bodies detained Uladzimir Dzyuba, chief editor of the Radio-2 channel of Belarusian State Television and Radio Company, and Aleh Tryzna, a radio journalist. They are accused of "petty hooliganism." On May 1 agents of special services in civilian clothes made an assault on television reporters of the Russian companies NTV and RTR.

These and other facts, according to the BAJ, are evidence of violence on the part of authorities, which cannot be justified in the civilised world. The Association calls upon journalists in all democratic states to show solidarity with their colleagues in Belarus who have to work under the conditions of dictatorship, police arbitrary rule and absolute disrespect for human rights.

Belarus: KGB Denies Involvement in Attack on Russian Journalists

WS0605083096 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0656 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minsk, 3 May. The Belarusian State Committee for State Security (KGB) bore no relation to the incidents that took place with reporters of the Russian television companies NTV and RTR in Minsk on the completion of the May Day demonstration. This was officially announced to a BELAPAN correspondent at the KGB Centre of Information and Public Relations. Moreover, according to the Centre, the Committee in cooperation with other law enforcement bodies launched an investigation into these incidents. Nevertheless the Centre refused to inform the correspondent of any specific results of this investigation.

Belarus: Trade Union Head Views Situation, Stance

WS0305143596 Minsk NARODNAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 3

[Interview with Belarusian Supreme Soviet Deputy Uladzimir Hancharyk, chairman of the Belarusian Trade Union Federation, by Aleh Nikalaychyk; place and date not given: "The Trade Unions' 1 May Solidarity: Full and Timely Salaries"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] [Nikalaychyk] Mr. Hancharyk, how do you asses the measures undertaken by the government and the presidential vertical structures to stabilize the economy?

[Hancharyk] There were certain positive moves in the industrial sector in March, and we observed a production increase. Immediately voices appeared that the process of fundamental improvement had begun, that is to say, a turning point had been observed. However, the economic processes should be scrutinized as a whole. I am afraid that currently a kind of glorification of our situation's improvement will begin. Trumpets of glorification will be heard. Why, then, do we have a growth of the unemployment rate, including latent unemployment? Another terrible thing which is occuring in our country is the collapse of workers' collectives which, as we know, have been established for years and decades.

What is the reason for this situation? First, it was an unconsidered decision to preserve collectives by all means, without creating new jobs, which has led to the situation in which the number of collectives has decreased. Many enterprises have only pensioners and low qualified employees on board. Not accidentally, the enterprises' leadership say openly that they are not able to produce new competitive commodities. In this

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situation, we need a correction: Something should be done with these kinds of collectives.

Currently, it would be indecent to ignore another aspect, too: Discipline has dropped dramatically. Drinking and stealing are observed everywhere — in factories, plants, construction sites, and state farms. Trade union members have been forced to talk about these problems everywhere. This is not at all a topic for a festive day, but we cannot turn a blind eye to these problems. If we do not manage to restore order, we will witness a complete collapse. At the moment, we instruct our local trade union employees and our trade union commissions: Your demands have to be rational and in conformity with the law; do not forget how trade union members sometimes behave, what kind of labor force we have, and whom you protect. It is very alarming to witness the collapse of workers' collectives. This is truly a national problem. We are going to discuss this problem together with all the interested parties on 3 May, when we will recapitulate the results of observing the 1996 general agreement between the government, the association of entrepreneurs, and trade unions.

There is something else which worries trade unions. It is the inconsiderate policy pursued at the national level toward the limitation of salaries. Is it not enough that the purchasing capability of the population has dramatically dropped and that salaries of foremen and engineers have been reduced to the level of low qualified assistants...? Excuse me for saying this, but who is going to work for this kind of money? People are quitting their jobs. The leveling policy with regard to wages, which is persistently pursued by the government, does not stand criticism and cannot be tolerated. The Cabinet of Ministers' attempt to determine the ceiling of wages for enterprises of all kinds of ownership can be deemed only as economic nonsense.

What are we heading for? Where did we lose the stimulation for work? The trade unions cannot remain silent when this kind of policy is being pursued by the authorities. In fact, we are following a road to nowhere. We will find ourselves in a deadlock, and what is more, a preplanned deadlock. One cannot go far solely by reprimands and scolding. Hard demands which are not beefed up by economic methods will force certain managers to bring back to life the forgotten procedure of padding the figures. Those figures would be a treat for an eye and for an ear and would be added again to the volume of unfinished construction projects. By doing so, those managers will rescue themselves. You see, the production volume increased in March. Why, then, is there no growth in sales and no reductions of credits and debts? This question is far from being rhetorical. The point is that for unknown reasons the government is acting sluggishly. Therefore, the resolution on the postponement of budgetary revenues and resources was not passed. Meanwhile, this has been done in Russia to help enterprises work under normal conditions. I would like to underscore once again that the embellishment of reality does not lead to anything good.

[Nikalaychyk] It seems that it was not an accident that the Supreme Soviet recently, for the first time, rang the "alarm bell" of no confidence in the government?

[Hancharyk] Yes, agricultural sector employees, more than anyone else, feel the impact of the authorities' inertia. Although, undoubtedly, we should not accuse the government of all the mortal sins. After all, the government primarily pursues the policy of the president and his administration. In my opinion, the alarm bell rang not for the Cabinet of Ministers, but rather for the entire system of the national executive power. Two governments for one small state are too many. We currently have this kind of situation. There are two centers which are trying to supervise all and everything: One is in K. Marx Street [the Cabinet of Ministers] and the other one is on Independence Square [the Presidential Administration]. This situation cannot be continued any further. One can see with the naked eye that Mikhail Chyhir's government is being used as a fire brigade: It is being sent here and there.... We are trying to patch the holes. Meanwhile, there is still no strategy developed. What is going to happen to large enterprises and villages? What should we do with enterprises which became insolvent?

This is state property and the government should make decisions. Nobody will resolve our problems for us; neither will integration of any kind be helpful.

After all, it is elementary truth that the state budget depends on the state of the economy. In Belarus, it is sometimes possible to put everything upside down. Even the catastrophe in Chernobyl is being discussed in some kind of isolation. Meanwhile, we are doomed to live with Chernobyl since the Chernobyl problem is an economic problem. If there is no economic growth there will be nothing. It is not worth waiting for miracles.

We have engaged in excessive denationalization — which is another extreme. However, the center should not supervise all the areas of life. It is not possible and not necessary. Yes, currently the government should deal with the "Haryzont" [television sets factory], tractor, and truck plants. However, for all the rest it is necessary to establish normal economic rules in the form of taxes, credits, and the like. Only an independent entrepreneur can lift an enterprise from the collapse or set up a new one. Then, we will have additional jobs; the unemployment rate will drop; salaries will rise; sums

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deducted to the state treasury will increase; the situation of the chronic nonpayment of wages will disappear.

[Nikalaychyk] Recently, the employees of the Minsk-based "Belvar" amalgamation, due to the lack of money and out of despair, have almost blocked Skaryna Avenue. The February events are still fresh in our memories. What is the current situation?

[Hancharyk] Many plants and factories continue to stay idle. Generally speaking, a number of enterprises suspended their operations in April. People were once again sent on compulsory annual leave.

Yes, thanks to the efforts on the part of trade unions and president, we personally managed to prevent mass workers' protests in February. The promises made by the authorities, including the payment of salaries were, in general, kept. We can say that we did that in a civilized manner. However, the huge sums were paid from the acquired credits, and currently, the situation is worsening again. The debts for the nonpayment of salaries have doubled; the menace of staff reductions is hanging over people like a Damoclean sword. If nothing effective is done to reanimate the economy, mass protests may become regular. There is still a store of confidence in the president and in the authorities, in general. However, as we know, it is a feeble line between love and hate.

We are risking that toward the fall we will have widespread, and more importantly, ungovernable worker protest actions, providing that everything in this country will be done the same way as it is now. We should not calm ourselves saying that everything is normal in Belarus. It is quite the contrary. It is understandable that advisers and assistants of the head of state want to adjust to the leader's mood. Therefore, they say and write what the "top people" would like to hear. However, we should seriously worry about the situation if the leaders in the center and in the provinces are doing the same.

Currently, trade unions have presented the Supreme Soviet with a proposal on granting wages the status of priority payments. We are also insisting on the legalization of the regulation on the accountability of an employer for the delay of payments. It will become clear in May whether our colleagues-deputies will support us or not.

[Nikalaychyk] What is the stance of the Trade Unions Federation on the integration with Russia?

[Hancharyk] As you probably know, trade unions have always been internationalist in their essence. We fully support mutually beneficial close economic relations. The Trade Unions General Confederation has approved the union of "four" [Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan] and the union of "two" countries within the framework of the CIS. The meeting of trade union activists of three countries — Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus — is to take place in Homel in May. It is planned to hold discussions on direct ties between industries and specific enterprises. It has been scheduled to undertake similar measures in Kazakhstan at the end of May. The trade unions are going to use their economic, social, and trade contacts in every way possible. At the same time, we are going to discuss the issue of protecting working people given that transnational companies, joint ventures, and financial groups are being established. In this area, trade unions have faced new tasks.

Now, I will say a couple of words about the Belarusian-Russian community. The most important thing is whether both sides will manage to move from political intentions — caused to a considerable degree by the interests of the elections in Russia — to economic ones. Boris Yeltsin said correctly at the ceremony of signing the agreement on 2 April: "Let us make a Belarusian car or a Belarusian tractor competitive products." This is an appropriate area of activities for our government and the Russian Government: To implement specific plans and mutually beneficial projects. If there are no specific moves, we will be back where we started, both in Moscow and in Minsk.

Belarus's fate and its unique geographic location predetermine a multidirectional economic policy. We should not be oriented only toward the Russian market. Judging by the information on the recent visit to Germany by a Belarusian representative delegation, our president thinks the same. If we manage to step up our activities in time, we will manage to overcome the crisis. We should, as the saying goes, roll up our sleeves and get down to work.

Moldova

Moldova: Committee Chairman Cepoi Disagrees With Council of Europe

AU0405182996 Chisinau INFOTAG in English GMT 2020 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, May 2 (INFOTAG) — The Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Control and Petitions Aurel Cepoi of the Socialist Unity faction expressed disagreement with Council of Europe representatives concerning the current situation in Moldova. In Particular, Lord Finsberg, Chief Rapporteur on Moldova, had regarded the situation as "a political and constitutional crisis."

Aurel Cepoi told INFOTAG there is no need to exaggerate, coloring the state of things this way. At the same

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time, Cepoi expressed regret that "controversies between power branches and aggravation of political struggle in Chisinau have come to be noticed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe".

"In case the situation keeps on deteriorating and comes to be discussed by the Council of Europe, both the President and Parliament will respond appropriately to the international forum's recommendations. And though the Council of Europe's decisions have only a recommendation character, member countries must fulfill them, or they will face a risk of becoming isolated from the rest of Europe", Cepoi said.

This fully applies to the Russian Federation, too, which will have to fulfill the commitments it took at joining the Council of Europe, including the ones pertaining to the withdrawal of its troops from the Moldovan territory, the deputy said.

"Even if the presidential elections are won by the communist leader Gennady Ziuganov, there will be no principal changes in Russia's external policy, and no extremist ambitions", believes Aurel Cepoi, who is fully confident that the troops will be removed, but is not sure that Russia will strictly observe the three-year schedule set for the withdrawal.

Moldova: Poll: 50 Percent of Population Support USSR Restoration

LD0205163496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1241 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHISINAU, May 2 (Interfax) — About one half of Moldova's population support the idea of a restoration of the Soviet Union or a creation of a new state of former Soviet republics, according to a recent survey of 1,487 residents of all Moldovan regions, except for Transdniester, conducted by the Mneniye (Opinion) service.

According to the results of the survey, only 17% of Moldovans view the socio-political situation in the country as good, while 56% said it is "bad" and 14% described it as "very bad."

As many as 82% of those polled are not satisfied with the level of democracy in Moldova. A total of 29% expect the situation in the country to get worse in the near future, while 17% believe it will improve and 38% said it will remain the same.

To achieve economic prosperity, 49% of those polled believe that Moldova should have closer ties with the CIS, 31% - with European economic institutions and 4% - with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization.

The survey also showed that if parliamentary elections in Moldova were held soon, 16.5% of those polled would vote for the ruling Agrarian Democratic Party, while about 10% would cast their ballots for the Communist Party.

Moldova: Foreign Minster Popov Meets Council of Europe's Tarschys

AU0405203296 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2110 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Strasbourg/Chisinau, 02/05/1996 (BASA-press) — Moldovan Foreign Minister Mihail Popov met today with Daniel Tarschys, Secretary General of the Council of Europe [CE], in Strasbourg, according to a press release from the Moldovan Foreign Ministry.

Popov apprised the European dignitary of the main political and socioeconomic developments in Moldova and fulfillment of commitments made by Moldova upon the adherence to the Council of Europe last summer.

Foreign Minister Popov confirmed Moldovan officials' will to live up to these commitments and further democratic reforms in all areas.

Tarschys displayed lively interest in Moldova's problems and said the CE would closely watch further developments in Moldova and would encourage the efforts of consolidation of democratic institutions and the rule of law.

Minister Mihai Popov signed in the presence of Daniel Tarschys several European conventions that would allow Moldovans to access mechanisms that guarantee the rights and freedoms set out in these documents.

Moldova: Snegur, Lucinschi Agree to Civilian Defense Minister

AU0405202996 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2110 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, 02/05/1996 (BASA-press) — President Snegur and Speaker Petru Lucinschi have reached an agreement to nominate a civilian defense minister, Anatol Ciobanu, presidential adviser in law, told BASA.

He said Snegur withdrew his message to Parliament demanding examination of possible replacement of Gen.Creanga as Defense Minister with Pavel Chirau, first deputy defense minister and chief of General Staff.

According to Ciobanu, it would be much better if a military man held this office, because the laws were drawn up from this perspective.

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"The appointment of a civilian minister will require changes to the law," said Ciobanu.

Deputy Speaker Dumitru Diakov has said at a conference that the situation is abnormal; on one hand, there is the Constitutional Court ruling and on the other hand, Snegur runs the army through direct orders, while Minister Creanga is a sort of minister emeritus.

Diakov referred to Snegur's recent order forbidding Pavel Creanga to establish contacts with foreign military departments and sign agreements on behalf of the Defense Ministry.

Moldova: Presidential Security Service Rejects Diakov Accusations

AU0405202896 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 2020 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, May 2 (INFOTAG) — The Presidential Press Service has stated that the faults committed by Deputy Speaker Dumitru Diakov, like the one with his accusation of the Presidential Security Service, are becoming a tradition which stands testimony to an overt anti-presidential campaign.

The Press Service today stood up with a Statement in reply to Diakov's assertions that the Security Service had allegedly closed doors of the Official Delegation Hall in the Chisinau airport before the parliamentary delegation who returned from Strasbourg last weekend. After the incident, President Snegur demanded explanations from incident-relevant officials.

The State Civil Aviation Department has reported that the delegation was expected to arrive one day later than it in fact did.

The Ministry of National Security has reported it had no information on the delegation's presence on board the airplane, and the official on duty invited all passengers to get inside the bus and then pass all necessary border-crossing and customs procedures inside the airport — as usually.

"Hence, Diakov's accusations against the Security Service were totally ungrounded", the Statement reads.

Valeriu Andronic, the Security Service chief, informed the President that none of his servicemen, who were then waiting for the head of state to arrive from Bucharest, gave any orders to anybody to close the Official Hall doors before the delegation. The security agents had no idea about the delegation traveling on board that airplane.

The Press Service has been authorized to state that even in case of a simple misunderstanding the Deputy Speaker has been making conclusions which are indicative of an open anti-presidential campaign.

"Such mistakes of Diakov are becoming a tradition, which makes the President state they are made deliberately in order to aggravate the situation before the parliamentary hearings of very important problems", the document reads.

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Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan: Tashkent Hosts International Seminar on Drug Controls

LD0405104096 Tashkent NARODNOYE SLOVO in Russian 3 May 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following a decision by the Cabinet of Ministers an international conference and seminar on issues of regional cooperation in the field of drug control opens in Tashkent on 3 May. [passage omitted]

The situation remains tense where attempts are being made to penetrate Uzbekistan from outside, using our country as a transit route for smuggling goods containing drug substances destined to be sold in the countries of the former Soviet Union and abroad.

As a result, there is virtually never a calm day for the republic's customs officers. The Main Customs Directorate prevented over 100 attempts at drug smuggling in the first quarter alone and seized and destroyed 1.5 times more drugs being transported illegally by rail, road, air, post, and black market messenger on foot than over the same period last year. A total of about one centner of dangerous substances — marijuana, hashish, opium and poppies [Uzbek: kuknor] — have been stopped at the republic's border and withdrawn from criminal trade circulation.

Smugglers are resourceful and are resorting to various tricks to weaken vigilance and conceal their criminal goods. Customs officers jointly with the law-enforcement agencies of Syrdarya Region stopped and inspected a ZIL-131 road tanker carrying petroleum. The tanker was heading towards Khodzhent in Tajikistan via Gorno-Badakhshan [Autonomous] Region. Inspectors found an illegal cargo of 21.5 kg of opium in the tanker. The owner of a private vehicle in Surkhandarya Region tried to smuggle almost 22 kg of opium under the wing of his car. The drugs were confiscated by customs officers and the transgressor was made answerable in accordance with the law.

Customs officers in Andizhan found over seven kg of marijuana hidden among vegetables when checking a passenger flying to Moscow. Customs officers and interior ministry staff found hashish inside walnut shells belonging to a Turkmen citizen at Samarkand Railway Station. A smuggler from Ghalaba [bus] Station in Surkhandarya Region managed to stick almost half a kilogram of hashish somewhere we would rather not mention.

Of course, there are also unresolved problems hindering the work of Uzbek customs officers who are struggling with the illegal drugs turnover. We need to replace obsolete equipment, improve our methods, and gain more experience.

Crime has no nationality. Drug dealers are absolutely devoid of such concepts as national pride and patriotism and worship only one idol — the golden calf of gain. They are ready to poison both foreign consumers and their own compatriots with their goods. Only by combining efforts and by consolidating international cooperation can we make a successful stand against this evil.

Uzbekistan: Karimov, UN Official Discuss Cooperation in Drug Fight

LD0505193196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1447 GMT 5 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Uzbek President Islam Karimov and U.N. Under-Secretary-General Giorgio Giacomelli, managing director of the U.N. international program on control over the drug business, discussed cooperation in the framework of the regional seminar devoted to illegal turnover of drugs held in the Uzbek capital.

The officials underlined that the seminar-conference on control over drugs will help in the struggle against the drug business and the illegal turnover of drugs. It was pointed out that law enforcement bodies are unable to implement an efficient border control in all the Central Asian republics due to a shortage of experience, and the lack of modern equipment and qualified personnel.

The subregional program and memorandum on mutual understanding between Central Asian republics adopted by the conference and the U.N. program on drug control will be "efficient in the struggle against the transportation of drugs and the spread of drugs," the officials said.

Representatives of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and the United Nations signed this memorandum in Tashkent Saturday. It also provides for struggle against abuses of drugs and psychotrophe substances.

"The memorandum will coordinate the activity of the CIS law enforcement bodies in control over drugs and their transportation from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran to Central Asia and further to Russia," said Aleksandr Sergeyev, who represented Russia at the conference. "If ten years ago law enforcement bodies confiscated only 200-300 kilograms of opium in the whole of the USSR, they confiscated more than 1.2 tonnes of raw opium in Russia alone last year," Sergeyev said.

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Uzbekistan: Afghanistan Said Behind Rise in Regional Drug Smuggling

NC0305154396 Paris AFP in English 1456 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tashkent, May 3 (AFP) - Afghanistan on Friday was accused by international specialists gathered in the Uzbek capital Tashkent of being behind a rise in drug trafficking in central Asia.

"It is with drug money that the various Afghan factions purchase their weapons," said Uzbek President Islam Karimov, at the beginning of a two-day meeting here.

He added that the United Nations should impose a weapons embargo against Afghanistan, which he charged was using its border with Tajikistan as a transit point for the smuggling of opium and cannabis.

"In 1995, 1,300 kilograms (2,865 pounds) of drugs were seized, and 600 additional kilos were seized in the first three months of this year," he said.

Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Komilov estimated that drug trafficking nets dealers up to 500 billion dollars a year.

According to the United Nations, the five former Soviet republics in central Asia also have illegal opium poppy fields being cultivated on their soil.

"The total area under illicit opium poppy cultivation is estimated at around 2,000 hectares capable of producing more than 30 tons of opium," according to a UN report. "Cannabis grows wild elsewhere across Central Asia, but most extensively on about 170,000 hectares in the Chu Valley, shared by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan."

The foreign ministers of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are to sign during their unprecedented meeting here a memorandum to coordinate their efforts in battling the drug problem.

Uzbekistan: EU Backs Uzbek Entry Into World Trade Organization

LD0505182296 Tashkent NARODNOYE SLOVO in Russian 4 May 96 p 1

[Joint Communique on Talks Between the Delegations of the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan]

[FBIS Translated Text] The second round of talks between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Uzbekistan took place in Tashkent on 29 April, resulting in the initialling by the parties of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which is to be concluded between the European Union and Uzbekistan, provides for cooperation in various fields covering virtually all the spheres of bilateral relations except defense and security. On the basis of mutual commitments to respect human rights and the democratic principles of the development of civil society based on the laws of the market economy, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement provides for political dialogue, mutually advantageous trade, the establishment and activity of companies, intellectual property rights, and free movement of investments.

The EU is to offer Uzbekistan assistance in many economic spheres such as transport, power engineering, telecommunications, financial services, privatization, science and technology, education, ecology, and the upgrading of personnel skills.

The EU is also to support Uzbekistan entry into the World Trade Organization.

The Uzbek side attaches great significance to further expanding trade relations with the European Union. The parties are of the opinion that Uzbekistan's joining the World Trade Organization as soon as possible will facilitate implementation of this task.

Among the parties' shared values mentioned in the draft agreement was the great importance attached to supporting the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Uzbekistan, which is a serious factor for the stability of Central Asia.

The parties undertook to adhere strictly to the principles defined in the documents of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], and noted that the supremacy of law, respect for human rights, the creation of a multiparty system, and the development of market relations were of paramount importance. It was recognized that the implementation of the agreement to the letter will help Uzbekistan to make greater efforts to reform its political, economic, and legislative systems.

The successes Uzbekistan has achieved in political and economic reform have created a reliable basis for starting talks on this agreement, and for their fruitful conclusion. The parties noted with satisfaction that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement is not only a long-term accord in itself, but also highlights a mutual understanding about Uzbekistan's future development and its place in the international community. The agreement is a document, on the basis of which relations between the European Union and Uzbekistan will extend and expand.

The agreement thus shows that the European Union attaches great importance to the role of Uzbekistan, regarding the republic as its main partner in the Central Asian region.

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It was also agreed that the agreement will be signed at the earliest moment convenient for both parties.

Uzbekistan: Karimov Discusses Cooperation With Foreign Oil Companies

LD0505193596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1447 GMT 5 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Uzbek President Islam Karimov discussed cooperation between Uzbekistan and the world's leading oil companies during his meeting with vice president of the American corporation Yunocal D. Martimiller and vice president of the Delta Oil Company from Saudi Arabia W. Candrerim.

The parties made the conclusion that this cooperation will assist in the speedy development of Uzbekistan's natural resources. Tashkent is ready to work with these companies on a partnership basis in order to implement the project providing for the construction of oil and gas pipelines by joint efforts.

The Uzbekneftegaz company and these firms signed a protocol on intentions to survey and develop hydrocarbon resources.

Tashkent and these corporations have also concluded a framework agreement on the construction of the Central Asian oil pipeline and gas pipeline.

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Armenia

Armenia: Russia's Grachev Praises Military Cooperation With Armenia

LD0305135396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1230 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, May 2 (Interfax) — Russia and Armenia hold the leader among CIS countries in bilateral military cooperation, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev told a Thursday news conference in Yerevan after a meeting of top officials from the Defense Ministries of the two countries.

He said 12 agreements and protocols on military and technical cooperation were signed. In his opinion they enriched the legal foundation of bilateral relations. He said Russia and Armenia have over 30 joint documents related to defense.

Among the documents signed Thursday Grachev singled out the cooperation plan of the two ministries for 1996 and the protocol on the formation of a coalition force in Transcaucasia.

In reply to a question from Interfax the minister said the coalition would not be directed against any third country. He said the defense doctrines of Russia and Armenia do not imply any adversary.

According to Grachev, the purpose of the coalition the formation of which should be completed by autumn is to guarantee the common security of the two countries.

"We will work to bring other Transcaucasian countries to the group, but we will not impose our will on anyone," the minister stressed.

He said three large-scale Russian-Armenian headquarters and troop exercises are planned for summer.

At the news conference the Russian Air Defense Commander-in-Chief Col.Gen. Viktor Prudnikov stressed the importance of the Thursday agreement on the formation of a common air defense system.

In his opinion the agreement offers Armenia the possibility to acquire "everything necessary for improving its air defense."

Prudnikov said during summit meetings the Russian side has asked Azerbaijan to join the CIS air defense system because this would "simplify the solution of many problems."

"As the chairman of the coordinating council of the CIS joint air defense system I would be glad, if all countries not belonging to it yet joined it," the general stressed.

Armenian Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisiyan described the agreements as history-making.

He stressed that Armenia signed a bilateral military cooperation agreement with Russia back in 1992 and voiced hope that in the future bilateral relations in the sphere would be no less effective.

Armenia: Military Agreements Signed by Grachev, Sargisyan Detailed

NC0405135996 Yerevan SNARK in English 0939 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, May 3 (SNARK) — Yesterday, Pavel Grachev and Vazgen Sargisyan, Russian and Armenian Defense Ministers, signed 13 documents after the working meeting between warlords of the Defense Ministries. These are:

— protocol of the working meeting between high-ranking officials from the Russian and Armenian Defense Ministries concerning bilateral military cooperation;
— intergovernmental protocol of controlling the quality of deliveries designed to the Armenian and Russian Armed Forces;
— protocol of utilizing radio parts by the Russian military base in Armenia and providing the electromagnet compatibility of radio electronic systems;
— protocol of approaches to forming the coalition troops in Transcaucasus comprising of Russian Armed Forces, the Team of Russian Troops in Transcaucasus and the Armenian Armed Forces;
— protocol of bilateral cooperation in the area of planning and conducting joint operations and training;
— protocol of recruiting of the Russian military base in Armenia;
— protocol of military-technical cooperation;
— protocol of bilateral cooperation in the field of interactions between Armenian Armed Forces and units of Russian troops in Armenia;
— protocol of military training and education;
— protocol of military-research cooperation;
— protocol of air defense cooperation.

The scheme of bilateral cooperation between the Russian and Armenian Defense Ministries for 1996 was approved. The parties endorsed the draft agreement on legal status and terms of the Russian air unit's deployment in Armenia.

After the signing ceremony Grachev said the list of signed documents proves the multitarget nature of Armeno-Russian military cooperation.

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Armenia: Russian Patriarch Meets Catholicos, Grachev; Ends Visit

NC0405164096 Yerevan SNARK in English 1622 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Echmiadzin, May 3 (SNARK) — Catholicos of All Armenians Garegin I and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russians Alexiy II stated at today's joint press conference in Holy Echmiadzin that church cooperation will bring closer the Russian and Armenian nations.

Alexiy II noted that he is paying a reciprocal visit to Armenia after Garegin I visited Moscow last year. He emphasized that his Armenian visit took place on the eve of two important dates, 2000th anniversary of Jesus Christ's advent and 1700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia. Alexiy expressed hope the two countries will celebrate the anniversaries together. Chief clergymen of Russia and Armenia expressed hope that the 1700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia will become a feast for all the Christian world.

The Patriarch of All Russians handed over four books of History of Russian Church to the Armenian Church. The books are being published on the occasion of the 850th anniversary of Moscow. The remaining five books will be handed over as soon as they are published.

Alexiy II told reporters about his yesterday's visit to the Russian Church of the Virgin in Yerevan. According to him, like any other Russian or Armenian church, this one also needs to be renovated and recovered.

Answering SNARK's question on the way the clergymen intend to help attain and strengthen peace in the region and solve the Karabakh problem, Alexiy II and Garegin I voiced in favor for dialogue between the belligerents. All the problems should be solved thorough negotiations as war only hampers their solution, Alexiy said expressing readiness to organize another meeting between the Russian, Armenian and Azeri high-ranking religious representatives.

The Russian Orthodox Church was given the relic of Apostle Andrey held by Holy Echmiadzin.

Today in the afternoon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russians left for Moscow.

Today, Catholicos of All Armenians Garegin I received Russian Patriarch Alexiy II and Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev in Holy Echmiadzin. The Catholicos joked that he had deliberately invited them to Echmiadzin knowing that Grachev and Patriarch do not very often meet together in Moscow.

Garegin I said that the role of clergymen is to take care of human lives gifted by God. We, the clergymen, regard the army as something meant to protect human lives, he noted. The Russian Patriarch and Armenian Catholicos, Armenian and Russian Foreign Ministers put flowers on the monument of Russian soldiers killed while defending Echmiadzin during the Russian-Persian war in 1827. Garegin I and Alexiy II prayed for memory of the killed.

Pavel Grachev in turn said that the visit to Armenia proves their desire to tightly cooperate with Armenia. Only peace can promote tight cooperation not only between the armies, but also between the political parties, public movements of the two countries.

Military crafts with the flags of Armenian Republic and Russian Federation flew over the monument to symbolize the meeting.

Armenia: Azerbaijan Said 'Concerned' at Grachev Visit to Armenia

NC0405140396 Yerevan SNARK in English 0939 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, May 3 (SNARK) — Azeri politicians are concerned about Russian Defense Minister's visit to Armenia.

Today the Baku television explained the reason for the visit by Moscow's attempts to strengthen its ties with Armenia and Iran in order to prevent the West from penetrating into the Transcaucasian region.

Baku considers Russia's intention to open military bases in Armenia to be a pressure on Azerbaijan and Turkey, demonstration of its favorable attitude towards Armenia and support for Yerevan to boost Armenia's cooperation with Tehran.

The Baku television stated that the time of Grachev's visit is conditioned by upcoming presidential elections in Armenia.

According to a TV observer, Boris Yeltsin viewing Armenia as a reliable partner of Moscow will try to involve other Transcaucasian republics in the sphere of Russian interests with Armenia's help. The problem is that Russian national-patriots and Communists support this idea.

Thus, Azerbaijan has to defend its independence solving at the same time the Karabakh conflict under such complicated conditions, concludes the political observer of the Baku television.

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Armenia: Deputy Raises Problem of Nuclear Waste Disposal

NC0505155496 Yerevan ARAGIL ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN in English 0720 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan ("LRAGIR OR" daily), 05/02/96 — A deputy of ROA [Republic of Armenia] National Council Victor Dallakyan raised the problem of nuclear wastes of the ANPP [Armenian Nuclear Power Plant] again during the session on 1 May.

He said that, according to an agreement, signed between Armenia and Russia in 1994, Russia takes care for the nuclear wastes of the plant. He said that removal of 1 kg of wastes costs $1,500. Starting from 1985, 160 tons of wastes have accumulated in Armenia, therefore about $200 mln. [million] are needed to remove them.

At the same time Mr. Dallakyan said that, according to an agreement signed with French organizations, a graveyard for nuclear wastes will be created near the village of Medzamor. This means that a problem exists with removing the wastes from the country, whereas burying them locally may result in ecological emergency.

Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan responded to this report and declared that the figures are not true and, in addition to this, the wastes existed in Armenia for over 16 years, and virtually none have been removed. He said this problem exists all over the world, and has not been scientifically resolved. The government of ROA found a temporary solution for Armenia last year "until the science resolves the problem of what shall be done with the wastes". He added that "this problem has not been resolved anywhere in the world".

Armenia: Karabakh 'President' Restates Position on Solution

NC0305130696 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1537 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Stepanakert, May 2 (NOYAN TAPAN)—An international conference on the role and place of NGOs in conflict settlement started its Monday [29 April] sitting with discussion of POWs and hostages problem.

However, Chairman of the Karabakh Commission on POWs and hostages said the discussion could not be constructive since the Azeri representatives were not attending the conference. Karen Ohanjanyan, a coordinator of "Helsinki Initiative - 92" Committee said that Azeri and Karabakh commissions on POWs and hostages could not establish contacts since Azeri NGOs did not keep in touch with Azerbaijan's governmental authorities dealing with problems of POWs and hostages.

ICRC representative Pierre Reichel said the problem of POWs and hostages has multiple political aspects, which ICRC is unable to solve. ICRC considers that some of NGOs could establish contacts with relevant organizations in Azerbaijan to seek solution to this poignant problem.

Participants of the conference discussed problems of rehabilitation of refugees, especially, problems of providing the latter with job and housing.

Thereafter, participants of the conference met with President of Karabakh Robert Kocharyan.

Karabakh Presidential Spokesman Aleksandr Grigoryan reported that Kocharyan briefed guests on the political situation in the region, the course of the negotiating process as well as told about economic restructuring being implemented in Karabakh.

Robert Kocharyan said that the negotiations yield no tangible progress because of great difference observed in positions of the conflicting sides on key issues, such as safety and status of Karabakh. President stressed that voluntary return of refugees to their homes would become possible after a political accord is achieved.

In conclusion President Kocharyan reiterated Karabakh's commitment to freedom, democracy, and observance of human rights as basic principles for building a genuine democratic state.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Foreign Minister, Iranian Envoy Stress Promotion of Ties

LD0405102096 Tehran IRNA in English 0837 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, May 4, IRNA — The visiting Iranian deputy foreign minister for educational and research affairs, 'Abbas Maleki, and foreign minister of the Azerbaijan Republic, Gasan Gasanov, here Friday explored avenues for expanding Tehran-Baku ties, with the two sides voicing willingness to expand relations in all fields.

Praising Tehran's assistance to the republic, Gasanov referred to Iran as one of the important countries in the region.

Maleki stressed on promoting existing historical, cultural and religious ties between Iran and Azerbaijan, expressing hope that mutual relations would be further upgraded.

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In another meeting with the chairman of Azerbaijan's Academy of Science, Maleki discussed expansion of cultural and academic cooperation between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the first calligraphy fair in the Azerbaijan Republic was inaugurated here Friday at the presence of Maleki.

Sponsored by the Iranian Embassy in Baku, the week-long exhibit includes 103 works of 28 calligraphers belonging to the Union of Painters of the Azerbaijan Republic.

During the inaugural ceremony, Maleki and the chairman of the Azerbaijan Painters' Union, Farhad Khalilov, underscored the importance of art in bringing nations together.

The Iranian deputy minister arrived here Friday on a three-day visit. He is scheduled to leave for Tbilisi, Georgia on Sunday.

Azerbaijan: Iranian Diplomats To Discuss Oilfield Development

LD0305141296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1230 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, May 3 (Interfax) — The Azerbaijani government and Iranian diplomatic mission, now in Baku, are expected to discuss a possible Iranian participation on the development of the Shakh-Deniz oil field in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea as one of the main points on the agenda.

Negotiation on the Shakh-Deniz field are in a final stage, one Azerbaijani diplomat told Interfax. The Iranian national oil corporation plans to join the project involving leading oil companies such as Russia's LUKoil and UK's British Petroleum and Ramco.

The diplomat said other points on the agenda include bilateral relations, the regional situation and key international issues.

Azerbaijan: Organizations Call For Anti-Iranian Demonstrations 10 May

NC0405170096 Baku TURAN in English 0700 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/04.05.96/TURAN—A number of political organisations fighting for independence of South Azerbaijan appealed to citizens of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijanis of the world. They are calling to hold a rally on May 10 at 15.00 before the building of the UN Delegation in Baku. At the same time it is proposed to hold a rally before the buildings of the Embassies of Iran in all countries of the world.

"The purpose of a rally — is protection of Azerbaijanis kept in prisons of Iran for political motives," the appeal reads. [punctuation as received]

The appeal also notes that more than 400 representatives of candidates to deputies and the cadidates themselves from Azeri provinces of Iran have been arrested during the campaign of parliamentary elections. "More than 100 people had to escape from Iran and 15 people died," the appeal reads.

This joint document have been signed by European Committee of the Organisations of Azeri Rebirth, Azeri National Movement, Single Independent Front as well as by the Azeri Committee Committee of National-Liberation Movement in South Azerbaijan.

"The statements of those political groups are groundless, there were not any arrests or disorders in Iran, I have just returned from there," according to Deputy of Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Afshar Suleymani. He said that above-mentioned organisations do not have social base in Iran. Concerning the violations which took place during pre-election campaign, these facts are not declined by the official Iranian press, Suleymani said. "Thus, results of elections in Esfahan city were not admitted due to violations of law," he said. Deputy Ambassador categorically refutes the information on mass arrests and 15 dead.

"I think that appeals to rally will fall on deaf ear," Suleymani said commenting on his attitude to the appeal of the above-mentioned organisations.

Azerbaijan: Police Arrest Leading Dagestan Separatist, Foil Plot

NC0405172196 Baku TURAN in English 1332 GMT 4 May 96

["Special Services of Azerbaijan Arrested Asul Kasumov, Who Called Himself Imam of Dagestanian Lezgins"—TURAN headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/04.05.96/TURAN—The employees of the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan managed to prevent an operation for destroy of border posts located at the territory of Azerbaijan and Dagestan, planned by diverse groups, reads the information of the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan.

The information notes that Asul Kasumov, a citizen of Russia who lived in Dagestan, headed the diversion. He was arrested by special services of Azerbaijan on April 21, 1996.

Asul Kasumov is an active member of the Union of Muslims of Russia. Under the cover of religious activity

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Kasumov conducted propaganda of separatists ideas among the religious youth at the territory of Azerbaijan and Dagestan. According to his plan, diversion groups were to start actions in mid-May.

During the preliminary investigation it was established that, under the cover of religious organisations Kasumov managed to create about 10 armed groups each consisting of 25-30 men. Kasumov admitted that groups were armed very well. He also said that on April 20 this year a meeting was held in his flat where a decision on creation of armed groups in Azerbaijan was adopted.

Before, Asul Kasumov was accused for theft and has not any religious education, the information of the Ministry of National Security reports.

In April this year, during his stay in Baku he told local journalists that Lezgins of Dagestan and Azerbaijan want to create their own independent state and the power of Azerbaijan and Russia should help them to solve this problem.

Georgia

Georgia: Shevardnadze Pleased With Georgian Army Exercise 4 May

LD0405175896 Tbilisi BGI in Russian 1450 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Summary] BGI reports that the Georgian Army held a tactical exercise today at the Alget' training ground, south of Tbilisi, and was watched by President Eduard Shevardnadze, Supreme Council Chairman Zurab Zhvania, Defense Minister Vardiko Nadibaidze, Interior Minister Kakha Targamadze, and other officials.

About 200 troops from the Georgian Army's 11th Motor Rifle Brigade as well as three T-72 tanks, two Su-25 aircraft, one Mi-24 helicopter, six artillery pieces, and three mortars were involved in the exercise, which cost about 150,000 lari ($120,000) to conduct, according to BGI.

Speaking after the exercise, Shevardnadze said: "I have attended various military exercises. Of course, the scale of this exercise was not too big, but the main thing is good coordination of personnel and equipment. I was convinced today that the Georgian Army has begun to develop. The soldiers showed great skill despite their young age. The army will become a reliable shield for independent Georgia."

On the settlement of the Abkhaz conflict, BGI quotes Shevardnadze as saying: "I favor a peaceful resolution of the problem, but the army has to be prepared. It would be better if we did not have to go to war."

Georgia: Presidential Decree Demands Program for Abkhaz Settlement

LD0305153596 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1410 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 3 May — Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze has issued Decree No. 118 on "Drawing Up a State Program for Settling the Conflict in Abkhazia." According to the decree, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Irakli Menagharishvili; Minister of State Security, Shota Kviraia; Defense Minister, Vardiko Nadibaidze; Irakli Machavariani, personal envoy to the Georgian president for matters concerning the country's security, political problems, and settlement of the conflict, together with representatives of interested departments and organizations, must work out a program for a settlement of the Abkhaz conflict taking into consideration the current realities.

The program must be presented to the National Security Council for consideration before 20 May.

Georgia: Western Oil Pipeline for Azeri Oil To Go Via Georgian Town

LD0505164796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1246 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, May 5 (Interfax/PIA) — The "western" oil pipeline to transport early oil from the Azerbaijani Caspian oil deposits of Azeri, Chirag and Gyuneshli will go via the Georgian town of Kutaisi under an agreement signed on May 3 by head of the Azeri International Operational Company (AMOC), the project coordinator Terry Adams, and Kutaisi Mayor and Presidential Representative in central Georgia Timur Shashiashvili.

Adams reaffirmed at the signing ceremony that early oil from the Azeri oil fields (35 million tonnes in seven years) will go via two routes - the "northern" via Russian territory and the "western" via Georgia.

He refuted the claims of some Russian and western mass media that the AMOC is considering a third route "due to political instability in Russia and Georgia." They claim this route will go via Turkey to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan.

Adams also said the "western" pipeline will be built by the AMOC.

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***Georgia: Agricultural Sector Performance Outlined**

964F2037A Georgia SVOBODNAYA GRUZIYA in Russian 9 Apr 96 p 3

[Article by Spartak Grachev, under the rubric "Our Cherished Land": "Betting on Private Plots"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The food problem, one of the most acute problems for us, consists in the fact that this year the cause of delivering humanitarian grain from the United States has gotten more complicated. Domestic reserves must be actively employed, the yield per hectare must be restored and increased, and all the possibilities which the development of different forms of ownership provides must be utilized. The task, we can say directly, is not an easy one considering that we are now producing less than one-quarter of the amount obtained from the republic's agriculture in 1986.

Nonetheless, the 1995 results confirm that certain steps have already been taken on the way to reviving agriculture. State agricultural enterprises planted 39,700 hectares in winter grain and fodder crops, which is 19 percent more than in 1994. Fall plowing was done on 6,749 hectares. The average yield of farms was 11.7 quintals.

But the private entrepreneur is setting the tone in the countryside today. Thus, for example, grain production in the private sector last year rose by a factor of 2.5 as compared to 1990, while the corresponding figure for production of potatoes and vegetables was 75 percent.

Despite all the expenses and serious mistakes in the regions where land was distributed into private ownership, in itself this fact confirms that the peasant is becoming the main producer in the countryside. This is evident from the data cited in the table published below. The private sector leads in production of grain, potatoes, tobacco, vegetables, fruit, grapes, and citrus fruits.

Table: Data Characterizing the Dynamics in Production of the Main Agricultural Crops

1994			
Crop	**In all Categories of Farms**	**In the State Sector**	**In the Private Sector**
Grain	481.0	123.7	357.3
Tobacco	1.6	0.4	1.2
Potatoes	296.9	15.6	281.3
Vegetables	442.5	22.4	420.1
Fruits	372.6	3.6	369.0
Grapes	284.5	12.3	272.2
Citrus Fruits	97.7	1.1	96.6
Tea	60.7	44.3	16.4
1995			
Crop	**In all Categories of Farms**	**In the State Sector**	**In the Private Sector**
Grain	520	105	415
Tobacco	2.5	0.2	2.3
Potatoes	265	15	250
Vegetables	470	20	450
Fruits	445	15	430
Grapes	380	20	360
Citrus Fruits	118	13	105
Tea	43	33	10
In Percentages of 1994 Level, thousands of tonnes			
Crop	**In all Categories of Farms**	**In the State Sector**	**In the Private Sector**
Grain	108	85	116
Tobacco	156	50	1.9 times
Potatoes	89	96	89
Vegetables	106	89	107
Fruits	119	4.2 times	116
Grapes	134	1.6 times	132
Citrus Fruits	120	11.8 times	109
Tea	70	74	61

Due to this, the average yield of grain crops in all categories of farms increased by 8 percent in 1995 and totaled 20.1 quintals, while the corresponding figure for vegetables was 15 percent, reaching the level of 165 quintals.

Of course, this is by no means a record figure, especially since the total production volumes are substantially behind requirements. But it indicates that the possibilities which the development of private farming in the countryside opens up are only just beginning to be discov-

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ered. And effective assistance for peasants in incorporating land and the help of fertilizers, seeds, equipment, and plant protection means are needed. We must create conditions for them to sell the output grown in the near abroad too, protect them from predatory requisitions en route and at ad hoc customs, and so forth. To prevent the question arising of the fate of the rich apple harvest, as it did this year in the rayons of Shid-Kartlya.

Unfortunately, a bad situation involving feed procurement developed last year. Half as much of all types of feeds as last year was produced at state agricultural enterprises. Figured per standard unit of cattle, 4 quintals of feed units were procured; that is only one-quarter of the amount envisioned by the norm. It was not by chance that at public farms last year, there was also a decline in the productivity of the livestock herd, including cattle, pigs, sheep and goats, and poultry.

And although in the countryside today, from 70-93 percent of all cows, pigs, sheep and goats, and poultry belong to the populace, the general situation involving feed obviously had an effect here too.

Today the countryside is on the threshold of new changes. With the adoption of the Law on Land for Agricultural Purposes, fields that are now empty and abandoned will get new masters, and enterprising and skilled ones, we hope. And I would like to think that this will be a turning point in restoring the republic's agricultural potential.

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Estonia

Estonia: Kallas on Council of Europe Presidency, Russian Relations

LD0305203196 Tallinn Estonian Television Network in Estonian at 1800 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Estonian Foreign Minister Siim Kallas said at the Committee of Ministers' meeting of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg that guaranteeing human rights and preserving stability are still essential for Europe. As of today, Estonia is the presiding country of the Council of Europe.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified Correspondent] [passage omitted] The period when Estonia will be presiding is the first full six months when Russia is a full member of the Council of Europe. Before becoming a member, Russia committed itself to fulfilling over 20 promises. Estonian Foreign Minister Siim Kallas said that monitoring compliance with the obligations taken by member states is the main direction of Estonia's activities for the foreseeable future.

[Kallas] Of course, Estonia itself has no such opportunity on its own, it is the Council of Europe which has the opportunity. The states who have joined the Council of Europe have taken upon themselves obligations and if they cannot comply with these obligations, this raises justified protest among other states.

[Correspondent] Russia, as a new member of the Council of Europe, has clearly refrained from direct accusations against Estonia. Today, though, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov emphasized that the situation of the Russian population in Estonia was of particular concern to Moscow. At the same time, he hoped that a solution would be found at bilateral talks. Primakov added that the Council of Europe must use all its influence over the Baltic states.

[Kallas] Bearing in mind all the rhetoric of recent times between Estonia and Russia, this is not a particularly forceful statement. So, I will not predict that there will be a large area of conflict between us, but, of course, I could be wrong. [passage omitted]. [end recording]

Estonia: Kallas Accepts Chairmanship of CE Ministers

WS0305141796 Tallinn Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release in English 0835 GMT 3 May 96

[Statement by Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Siim Kallas to the Committee of Ministers meeting of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg on 3 May]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Secretary-General, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today to take over the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers for the first time in Estonia's, and the Council's, history. For Estonia, this is not simply an honor. It is an opportunity to display to our European neighbors Estonia's ability to uphold, lead and further the values and principles this institution was founded upon.

I am sure that my colleagues sense the pride with which Estonia takes over the Chairmanship. We are proud of the honor and the responsibility Chairmanship bestows upon our state and our citizens. But we also face the tasks before us with certain trepidation. Threats to stability and the safeguarding of human rights still smolder in Europe. Problems due to our past still confront us.

These challenges will be met with firm resolve, for Estonia has a debt to pay the Council of Europe. It is a debt of gratitude for the support provided by the Council in our return to Europe. It is this debt of gratitude that will provide the leitmotiv for our Chairmanship.

The examples of Council support are numerous, but I would like to highlight a few. The Council was instrumental in drafting our revised Constitution, the modern framework of Estonia's statehood. The Council helped us find an acceptable solution to the sensitive citizenship issue. It has promoted the reorganization of our judicial system. Most of all, it has significantly contributed to effective confidence-building measures, especially in the field of human rights.

In 1993, the Council of Europe decided that Estonia was ready for membership and opened the first door to European integration. Estonia's entry further confirmed our adherence to human rights and our dedication to upholding Council norms. Since entering, Estonia continues to move forward. Our parliament recently ratified the Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, thus fulfilling the obligations we undertook upon entry. But we will not stop here.

Mr. Secretary-General,

I would like to stress, once again, the full commitment of the Estonian government to all the values which the Council of Europe incarnates: pluralistic democracy, respect for human rights and for the Rule of Law. We shall do our utmost to make a positive contribution to the consolidation and promotion of our common values.

Our contribution will be partly made in Tallinn, and partly here in Strasbourg.

In Estonia, we shall give serious attention to expanding Estonian participation in the network of cooperation created by the many Council of Europe Conventions.

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Having successfully passed domestic legislation that reflects the needs of a democratic society, Estonia is now ready to look further afield.

It is the firm intention of the Government, now that the European Convention on Human Rights is ratified, to secure the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. A working party was recently established to study in detail the obligations resulting from this text. During our Chairmanship, we shall support the work of the CAHMEC [not further expanded]. We shall seek agreement on solutions which are compatible with both the justified aspirations of minorities and the legitimate interests of the majority.

In the same spirit we shall sponsor a meeting in Tallinn during August with representative European minority organizations with the aim of facilitating discussions on minority issues.

As the former head of the Bank of Estonia, I am personally very interested in the European Convention on Money-laundering. It is, in my view, important that the new market economies of Central and Eastern Europe do not lend themselves unwittingly to doubtful or illegal financial transactions. I would like to see the Convention more widely ratified by our member states, in particular those who have joined our organization in recent years. I shall personally take steps to seek the signature and ratification of this convention by Estonia.

Estonia is also working toward signing and ratifying the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. In our past we were subject to a corrections system which disregarded human rights and humane consideration of the individual. This cannot occur again. I will be frank and say that our prison system is still scarred by the conditions it inherited and its reform will not occur overnight. We are, however, doing our best to abide by the Western Prison Rules and quicken the reform process. The Council's welcomed support to the Nordic-Balt Prison Reform Project is just one of the ways we may work together in this field.

Another initiative Estonia would like to adhere to is EURIMAGES. We are also looking into the feasibility of joining the Social Development Fund.

Estonia, while conscious of reforming its past, is even more focused on shaping Europe's future. That is why here in Strasbourg, we shall promote the further enlargement of our Organization and the principles it is founded upon.

The Council a few months ago admitted our 39th Member State, Russia. I wish to reiterate that the Estonian Government welcomes the accession of all European States committed to democracy, the Rule of Law and the fulfillment of their obligations. No opportunity should be lost to make this organisation fully pan- European, and an instrument of constructive cooperation among all states on our Continent. These principles will frame our positive engagement with our newest members to the Council.

In this context I also welcome the positive opinion of the Assembly to extend membership to Croatia. Fostering democracy, promoting human rights and healing the wounds caused by war are of paramount importance in this region. I sincerely believe that Croatian membership will further peace in a region marred by conflict.

I have followed with satisfaction the involvement of the Council in the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina and I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General on excellent work done. I shall be happy to build upon this work and I look forward to the day when we can welcome this country in our midst.

In conjunction with our support for strengthening democracies in post-Soviet states, Estonia wishes to promote Council dialogue with the three Caucasian Republics. While talk about accession is premature, we should encourage the greatest possible assistance to these countries.

This Committee had a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Armenia two months ago. I also recently met with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan during a trip to the region. In my new capacity as Chairman, I would welcome the possibility to pay a visit, together with the Secretary General, to the three Caucasian republics. Estonia is glad to share its insight to the problems connected with the transition to a market economy and the Rule of Law.

Closely linked with the expansion of the Council is the issue of monitoring. It serves little purpose for the Assembly to vote opinions detailing the commitments of candidate States if these commitments are ignored after the ceremony of accession.

Estonia therefore attaches great importance on the constructive and goal-oriented functioning of the monitoring mechanism at our level, to be based on dialogue and persuasion, cooperation and non- discrimination. We shall endeavour to plan carefully the two meetings devoted to the substance of monitoring. We consider them to be of crucial importance for the future credibility of our organization.

Monitoring should be efficient as well as effective. In this context, it is vital that the various international organizations coordinate their efforts in order to increase our efficiency and to prevent different monitoring systems from being contradictory, overlapping or even counter-productive. The recent agreement to bring together experts on both the Council of Europe and OSCE for an exchange of views and monitoring experiences deserves our full support. One can not underestimate its practical value in enhancing the flow of information and cooperation between two organisations.

We in Estonia attach great importance on the proper functioning of a democratic judiciary. Thus, for the pur-

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pose of determining the judicial requirements resulting from membership, it is important to have clear and uncontroversial standards defined by experts.

In this framework, the Estonian Government intends to hold a conference in Estonia during October where the Presidents of Central and East European Supreme Courts, recognized specialists and scholars will gather. Our aim is to develop and articulate the requirements of a court system that is in full conformity with the Rule of Law.

Lastly, I also wish to stress the importance my Government attaches to the closest cooperation with the Assembly. The dynamic, forward-looking approach of the Assembly to the many problems our Continent faces is not lost in our Council. I have therefore invited the new President of the Assembly to visit Tallinn and suggested that the Political Committee meet in Estonia next month, on the 12th and 13th of June.

Mr. Secretary-General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have tried to outline some of the goals which my Government has for the Estonian Chairmanship and some of the hopes which we keep for the next six months. We shall embark upon this Chairmanship in a spirit of constructive cooperation, of mutual understanding and friendliness. I hope that I can count on your support, on the support of your Governments and the support of your people in the months to come.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to echo the words of my colleagues in welcoming the newcomers to this Committee, the representatives of the Russian Federation who joined us last February. Estonia, like all other Member States of the Council of Europe, seeks constructive co- operation within the framework of the Organisation with Russia. It is in our interest, it is in Russia's interest, it is in Europe's interest. We are confident that the ways and means of strengthening democracy within Russia can and will be found.

In Estonia, we are fully aware that membership places obligations upon us all, both individually and collectively. We shall, in our upcoming capacity as Chairman of this committee, do our best to facilitate the peaceful transition to a more democratic, a more tolerant, and a more open society in Europe and beyond.

This brings me to the monitoring procedure, the success of which, in my view, is absolutely vital for our Organisation, for its credibility and its future role in Europe. Estonia fully supports the principles laid down in the Declaration on Compliance adopted by our Committee at its 95th session. We also welcome the progress made in implementing this Declaration.

It is important that the monitoring process be granted the weight and attention it deserves by all member states of the Council, both new and old. We wish to see this process become one of the future centres of gravity of the Organisation. The procedure should, at our level, aim at looking into the compliance with not only the express commitments requested by the Assembly and accepted by the governments of candidate States, but also the implied commitments resulting from belonging to the European "family".

It is true that the commitments we took upon ourselves vary. But these differences are not due to arbitrary decisions. They are based on the factual situation within each country. They are indicative of each country's standing in their march toward democracy and the Rule of Law. Above all, they reflect our unified determination to apply European values and to abide by European norms and standards.

In creating the procedure for Committee monitoring, we must first establish where our goalposts lie, and then the rules of the game. The Council, as Europe's referee on human rights, will be quickly discredited if goal posts constantly change and the rules of the game differ from player to player.

The Secretary General's first factual overview is a welcomed step in initiating the monitoring process. It is only realistic that a perfect process cannot be created overnight. There are certain to be many comments, suggestions for improvement, and proposals for amendments to the overview. But regardless of the room for development, the overview is vital to opening debate on future Council monitoring.

This afternoon Estonia will take over the chairmanship of this Committee. As Chairman, I shall strive to build upon the important work carried out so successfully by my predecessors. It will be my privilege to meet with the ambassadors later today to share Estonia's goals and the specific activities we hope to undertake.

But right now I wish to pay a warm tribute — and I am sure that I speak on behalf of all of us — to our present Chairman, the Danish Foreign Minister, for his masterly, inspiring and constructive guidance of the Council of Europe during the past six months. I am confident that Estonia, as Chair of the Committee, will continue the legacy it is inheriting.

Estonia: Sweden Pledges To Support Baltic States EU Membership

LD0305172296 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1500 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sweden announced today that it intended to take care of the security of the Baltic states by supporting the aspirations of these states to become members of the European Union.

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Pierre Schori, a Swedish deputy foreign minister, told journalists that Sweden deems it to be its duty and the duty of other members of the European Union to stand up for the interests of the Baltic states in the current discussion over the extension of the European Union.

Schori spoke to journalists when the government delegations of the Baltic Sea states arrived in Visby for a 24-hour summit to discuss the future of the Baltic Sea region.

Estonia: Hungarian President Says Country Cannot Defend Itself

LD0305152696 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1300 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In his speech at Tartu University today, Hungarian President Arpad Goncz said that earlier there had been a lack of freedom in Eastern Europe but now there was a lack of security. Goncz said that the security of Hungary and other former socialist states could only be guaranteed through integration into Europe.

Goencz noted that the borders of Hungary were currently open and in the event of an attack Hungary would not be able to defend its state. [passage omitted]

Estonia: Hungarian President Views NATO, EU Issues

WS0605100896 Tallinn BNS in English 1458 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, May 4, BNS — The Hungarian President, Arpad Goncz, said Saturday in Tallinn that Estonia's chances to join NATO were vague at present.

"Many people doubt in Estonia's opportunity to join NATO and I could perhaps tell you my opinion in two moths," President Goncz told BNS.

Estonia is certainly one of the first among those countries wishing to join the European Union, but this cannot be said of accession to NATO at present, Goncz said.

Hungary supports Estonia's position among the first countries to be admitted to the European Union, and I hope also the Czech Republic and Poland support us here, because in the long run it is in the interest of us all, Goncz told BNS after a press conference on Saturday.

The Hungarian president also said the process of Eastern and Central European states' accession to the European Union was an irreversible process.

Presidents Lennart Meri and Arpad Goncz said at Saturday's press conference that Hungary and Estonia supported each other in accession to the European Union.

President Meri said very many details still had to be specified in the process of the European Union's expansion and Estonia could pass on its experience in these matters to other countries.

"We are more sensitive to percieve what might happen if Europe loses out," the Estonian president said.

The presidents said the relations between Hungary and Estonia were very good at present.

"The Hungarian president's visit will help guarantee stable development, security and extensive economic cooperation between Europe and Hungary," President Meri said.

"We had some very substantial conversation and I will go home in an optimistic mood," Goncz said. "Talks will have to be continued on the top level and also on ministerial level in order to bring our agreements into practice."

Presidents Meri and Goncz underlined the indivisibility of European security.

President Lennart Meri Saturday made a statement to say that Estonian-Hungarian relations would always be flavored by relations of kinship.

"It was a pleasure for us to learn during the state visit that Estonia and Hungary have similar views on the formation of European security. The European process of integration cannot be guaranteed by selective reorganizations," the president said in his statement.

"Hungary sees the Baltic countries' development and security as a European issue and President Goncz expressed full support of our aspirations."

"We agreed that we would continue to maintain contacts in the process of approaching the European Union, and we will also seek possibilities of cooperation in matters of defense."

Arpad Goncz said at the press conference that NATO had still not defined its criteria for the admission of new members.

"NATO's interest in countries of Central and Eastern Europe is greater than in the Baltic countries," Goncz told BNS.

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